Political Biography of a Delhi Sultan: Life and Works of Shamsuddin Iltutmish (1210-1236)

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Certificate of Original Work

This is to certify that the thesis attached herewith titled **Political Biography of a Delhi Sultan: Life and Works of Shamsuddin Iltutmish (1210-1236)** prepared and submitted by **Samana Zafar** in fulfillment of the requirements for the award of degree of **Doctor of Philosophy** in History is a bonafide record of research work done by her under my supervision and guidance.

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ABSTRACT

Among the early Sultans of Delhi, Shamsuddin Iltutmish (d.1236) was arguably the most outstanding in terms of military prowess, political adroitness, administrative acumen and cultural attainments. Scion of the famed Ilbari tribe of the Turks, Iltutmish had a humble and fairy tale beginning. Sold into slavery in his childhood, he rose to become the absolute monarch of a large and powerful empire by sheer dint of merit and rare manipulative skill. Like him the Sultanate of Delhi also had a modest beginning. When he ascended the throne of Delhi in 1210, Delhi was simply a small principality with no capital, no administrative infrastructure, no army and practically no boundaries. But when he closed his eyes quarter of a century later, the Delhi Sultanate had emerged as the most powerful Muslim state in the world. He single handedly gave this empire, in the words of K. A. Nizami, a capital, an independent state, a monarchical form of government and a governing class. Delhi became the cultural capital of the Muslim world and came to be known as Hazrat- i- Delhi during the very life time of the Sultan. The attainments of its poets, scholars, historians, jurists, Sufi saints and architects became the talk of the Muslim world. Most significantly, the Delhi Sultanate thanks to the efforts of Iltutmish, became the sole place of refuge where Muslims of Central and Western Asia, suffering from the devastating consequences of Mongol onslaught on their lands, could find succuor and safe heaven.

Needless to say that Shamsuddin Iltutmish deserves an honourable place not only in the history of Medieval India but in the history of Medieval Islam as well. His accomplishments as a man and as a monarch are worthy of a detailed and critical study. But a full scale study of the Sultan has somehow eluded the interest of the scholars so far creating a void in the extant historical literature on Medieval India. The present study is a modest attempt to bridge this gap.

The objective is to put Iltutmish's achievements in proper perspective by bringing to light those aspects of the Sultan's personality that has remained neglected up till now. Efforts have been made to consult all the relevant secondary and primary literature available on Iltutmish in order to do justice with the theme of my research and prepare a comprehensive and critical biography of the Sultan.

I have endeavoured to consult nearly all the contemporary and near contemporary sources relevant for my research theme. Information drawn from the archeological and numismatic sources as well as evidence culled from the medieval Sufi literature specially the *malfuzat* of major Sufis of the time has also been used. Paucity of sources particularly for the early Sultanate period has hampered the progress of my work but I have attempted to supplement the evidence available in these sources by reading practically all the secondary material which I could find on the subject. The study of the secondary material on the research topic has certainly helped me in the formulation of certain questions. Effort has been made to find answer of these questions with the help of the primary sources.

I have also made sincere efforts to adopt a critical approach while analyzing the data collected for this study for I believe that history writing involves not merely collection of data or evidence pertaining to the subject of research but a critical evaluation and interpretation of the evidence is equally important for putting the events of the past in their proper historical perspective in order to bring out their true significance. This approach has helped me significantly in finding answer to several controversial issues related to the life and works of Sultan Shamsuddin Iltutmish.

The thesis consists of eight chapters besides an introduction, conclusion and four appendices. The first chapter traces the early life of Iltutmish and the controversy regarding the actual spelling and pronunciation of the Sultan's name. The second chapter examines the problem of succession of Iltutmish. The status of Iltutmish as a rightful occupant of the throne of Delhi has been a subject of debate among the historians. The debate has focused, apart from the circumstances leading to Iltutmish's accession to the throne, on the theory of sovereignty and the law of succession in Islam. Many modern historians assert that Iltutmish was a usurper who appropriated the crown from its lawful claimant. In this chapter, the question of sovereignty in Islam as well as diverse other related and relevant aspects such as the territorial extent of the Delhi Sultanate at the time of Iltutmish's elevation to the throne, the relative position and significance of Lahore and Delhi, the mutual tension between two different groups of nobles etc, have been discussed. In the light of the available evidences, it has been shown convincingly that Iltutmish was not a usurper. The third chapter deals with the internal problems of Iltutmish. The chapter outlines the saga of Iltutmish's struggle and success against his rivals Tajuddin Yalduz, Nasiruddin Qabacha, Husamuddin Iwaz Khalji and many other Indian states; the failure of his adversaries to make common cause against the Sultan and the Sultanate, and the Sultan's success in carving out an extensive empire in the teeth of all the challenges and opposition. The fourth chapter deals with the external potentates and rivals of the Sultan. During the reign of Iltutmish, two significant events in term of foreign relations took place; the effect of both these events had important ramifications for the Delhi Sultanate. The first episode was the arrival of Khwarazm Prince, Jalaluddin Mangbarni in the Indian sub-continent and the subsequent appearance of Mongols on the Indian frontiers in his trail. For some time the security and defense of Indian states was in jeopardy in view of the fact that the

representatives of two great powers of Central Asia, the Khwarazmian and the Mongol, had placed their feet on the Indian soil. The other event of international significance was the arrival of the emissaries of the Khalifa of Baghdad to the court of Iltutmish with the deed of investiture (manshur) and the robe of honour (Khil`at). Theoretically, it buttressed the position of Sultan of Delhi as an independent ruling authority and raised the Sulatanat's status in the Muslim world. The fifth chapter attempts to deal with the administration of the Sultanate during the reign of Iltutmish. Administration is an important constituent and a natural follow-up of a political conquest. The success of Iltutmish and his reign of twenty-six years did not depend merely on his political triumphs but the organization of the administrative structure of the Sultanate had a fair share in it as well. This chapter deals with the efforts of Iltutmish to provide efficient administration to his Sultanate and the measures he adopted to guarantee the inflow of both men and money for the service of the Empire. How he organized the Iqta', raised an efficient central army, created a sound monetary system for the state, the various administrative offices he introduced, his idea of imparting justice etc. have been dealt in this chapter. The sixth chapter discusses the nobility during the period of Iltutmish. The members of the ruling class or nobles, designated as Khan, Malik and Amir, governed the empire at the behest and on behalf of the Sultan. The success and failure of an individual Sultan depended to a very large extent on the administrative ability and military prowess of his nobility. The nobility of the Delhi Sultanate was heterogeneous in character and comprised of different ethnic, religious and racial groups. This chapter also attempts to examine the nature and character of the nobles and officers of Iltutmish: their origin, composition, lifestyle and privileges, duties as well as the mode of their appointment, promotion and punishment. Who were the most important nobles during the reign of Iltutmish and what was the nature of their

relations with each other and with the Sultan has also been explored in detail. The question of *Turk-i-Chihilgani* has been analyzed in the light of the account of the Turk- i- Chihilgani given by Ziyauddin Barani and the biographies of some of the Shamsi nobles furnished by Minhaj. The seventh chapter attempts to analyze the religious leanings of Iltutmish and the factors responsible for Iltutmish's intimacy with the Sufis. Besides religious inclination, Iltutmish had sufficient reasons to be in the good books of the Sufis which have been discussed in the chapter. The last and eighth chapter examines the cultural attainments of the Sultan. The Sultan's achievements in the domain of architecture, literature and education have been reviewed. The concluding chapter narrates the achievements and innovations of the reign of Iltutmish. A critical estimate of his rule has been attempted is done and Iltutmish's place in Medieval Indian history has been defined.

The thesis also consists of four appendices. Appendix A shows the family-chart of Sultan Iltutmish. Appendix B attempts a brief life sketch of Firuz Iltutmish, the Shamsi noble who belonged to Qipchaq region. Appendix C deals with the Shamsi noble Malik Nasiruddin Madini Shansabani who belonged to the oldest ruling dynasty of Ghor, the family of Shansab.

Appendix D examines the Sufi-Ulama interface in the first half of the thirteenth century in the light of the political ambitions, ideological disparity and personal pursuits of the persons involved. It also tries to explore the over-all relationship between these two sections of medieval Indian society: Sufis, the followers of *tariqat* (the path) and Ulama, the upholders of the Shariah. The first half of the thirteenth century saw the commencement of the Muslim rule in India. It would be interesting to see if the ruler had any self-interest in promoting both these groups or was there any attempt on their part even to pit one against the other?

The account of the life and works of Sultan Shamsuddin Iltutmish leaves no doubt that he was the greatest monarch of the Early Sultanate period. Right from the time of his accession to the throne at Delhi, he dedicated himself completely to the task of making the Sultanate of Delhi an indomitable force. He worked tirelessly with determination, energy and great éclat to achieve his objectives. The spark of genius that Mu'izuddin Muhammad Ghori had seen in him during the Khokhar campaign in 1205 provided life breath to the Sultanate for twenty-six years. It is not for nothing that R. P. Tripathi has stated that the history of Muslim sovereignty begins properly speaking with Iltutmish. When Iltutmish was raised to the throne at Delhi, North India consisted of a cluster of small independent principalities under the Turkish governors and Indian princes. Chaos and anarchy prevailed in most parts of the region. He subdued one by one all his major rivals and pretenders to throne and prevented the infant Turkish state in India from passing into oblivion. Tajuddin Yalduz, Nasiruddin Qabacha, Husamuddin Iwaz Khalji, diverse Indian chieftains of Rajputana and Central India as well as the representatives of foreign powers in the North-west were defeated and forced to acknowledge the suzerainty of the Delhi Sultan. The attainment of the investiture from the Caliph of Baghdad was another feather in the Sultan's cap and created an honourable place for the Sultanate of Delhi in the comity of Muslim states. Isami called him an India conquering monarch (*Khusrav- i Hindgir*). In his person, Hindustan certainly discovered a supreme political leader she had been looking for a long time.

Iltutmish's contribution to the creation of an administrative structure for the Sultanate of Delhi is second to none. He made the Iqta' system the pivot of his administration and assigned the Iqta's to his officers purely on the basis of merit and utility to the state. The Sultan's contribution to the evolution of an efficient military organization for the Sultanate was no less significant. He created a large standing army which was directly recruited and paid by the centre.

Barani writes that the numerical strength of Iltutmish's army, war weapons, elephants and horses was more than that of Balban. The credit of building a capital for the Sultanate also goes to Iltutmish. Lahore, the erstwhile capital of the Ghaznavids and Qutbuddin Aibak would have been a natural choice to become the capital of the Sultanate owing to its pre-eminent position in the eleventh and twelfth centuries but Iltutmish very wisely chose Delhi to have the honour of being the seat of the Sultanate, situated as it was in a safe and secure location far away from the turbulent region and politics of the north- western frontier of India. The very fact that Delhi continues to be the seat of government even today speak volumes of Iltutmish's political sagacity and statesmanship.

Iltutmish also gave the Sultanate a well-structured and advanced monetary system. His reign is rightly regarded as water shed in the numismatic history of medieval India. Numerous coins of gold, silver and copper were issued during his reign. The silver Tankah and billon Jital introduced by him became the back bone of the Indian monetary system and later served as the basis of the currency system of the Mughals. The exchange value between Tankah and other coins was carefully worked out and the weight of the metal content in all the coins was adroitly adjusted. The silver Tankah is even regarded as the predecessor of the modern rupee.

Iltutmish selected his officers carefully and ensured that only the talented and the meritorious are appointed to high offices of the state. Although these officers belonged to diverse ethnic and social background, majority of them were Turkish slaves purchased by the Sultan from time to time. But these slaves did not have the monopoly of political offices in the Delhi Sultanate. A number of immigrants, Tajiks, Ghorids and even free-born Turks also formed part of the ruling class of Iltutmish.

The Sultan respected the Sufi saints and the Ulama equally. He was aware of their popularity among the people at large and made sincere efforts not to give them any cause for complaint. He offered the post of Sheikh- al Islam to leading Sufis to elicit their moral support for his policies as well as to enhance the prestige of the Sultanate. He cultivated cordial relations with the renowned Chishti and Suhrawardi saints of his time which is not only a measure of his reverence for them but of his political astuteness as well.

The Sultan's contribution to the progress and promotion of art, literature and education was no less significant. It is true that in the early period when the Sultanate was still in infancy, he focused primarily on consolidating his political gains and dealing with the pretenders to the throne of Delhi but as soon as he was able to remove them from his path he gave due attention to cultural pursuits. The buildings he constructed were replete with new techniques like the use of geometric patterns on the screens in the mosques at Delhi and Ajmer, construction of non-functioning minarets flanking the central arch in Ajmer and Badaun mosques and the introduction of Paradisiacal imagery in his own tomb by inscribing the Quranic verses promising paradise to the faithful which subsequently became a model for most medieval mausoleums including the celebrated Taj Mahal. He also constructed a large madrasah known as Madrasah i Nasiriya for promoting education among the masses. His regime was not devoid of literary activities as well. Historians like Hasan Nizami, Fakhr i Mudabbir, Minhaj-i Siraj, Awfi and scholars like Majduddin Jajarmi, Qazi Hamiduddin Nagori were active in India during this period. Poets of the stature of Taj Rezah, Saiyid Sirajuddin, Ameer Ruhani and Nasiri also adorned his court.

Needless to say that Iltutmish's contribution in the making and the expansion of the Delhi Sultanate was second to none. During the very life time of Iltutmish, the Delhi Sultanate

emerged as a place of refuge for Muslims from all over the world. Renowned maliks and amirs from Central and West Asia presented themselves for asylum and employment at his court. In the presence of these stalwarts, writes Barani, the court of Iltutmish came to rival the court of Mahmud of Ghazna and the Saljuq Sultan Sanjar. Like Mahmud, Iltutmish was also able to create such a solid legitimacy for his family to rule that in the turbulent thirty years after his demise (1236-1266) only members of his family were deemed fit to adorn the throne of Delhi. Even while nominating his successor Iltutmish gave importance to merit and talent and decided in favour of his daughter Razia (r. 1236-1240) much to the chagrin of his sons as well as nobles and in a daring violation of established norms. Only a man like Iltutmish was capable of taking such a bold step for which due credit should be given to him. It would be no exaggeration to suggest that he was a man born much before his age.

Needless to say that Iltutmish's contribution in the making and the expansion of the Delhi Sultanate was second to none. Minhaj-i Siraj who served as the Chief Qazi of the Sultanate during the reign of his son Muizuddin Bahram Shah (r.1240 – 1242) and who knew Iltutmish first hand, has rightly observed that 'the kingdom of Hindustan, by the grace of Almighty God, and the favour of fortune, under the shadow of the guardianship of the Shamsi race, and the shade of the protection of Iltutmish's dynasty, became the focus of the people of Islam, and the orbit of the possessors of religion.' It would therefore be no exaggeration to suggest that Prof. A. B. M. Habibullah's famous observation that 'Aibak outlined the Delhi Sultanate and its sovereign status, Iltutmish was unquestionably its first king' need to be modified. In fact, it should read as follows: **Iltutmish outlined the Delhi Sultanate and its sovereign status, and he was unquestionably its first king.**

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When I commenced my journey on the difficult and arduous terrain of research and writing in June 2007, I had no idea how challenging this task would be. However, the unfailing support and guidance of my teachers, family members, friends and well-wishers facilitated my task and it is my solemn duty to express my gratitude to each and every one of them. First of all, I wish to express my gratitude to my supervisor Professor N. R. Farooqi. His constructive criticism, useful suggestions and willingness to come to my rescue whenever I faced any problem as well as constant support throughout my research and writing has been most rewarding and fruitful. His encouragement and faith in my abilities motivated me to invest all the time and energy that I could afford on the task at hand and bring it to a successful conclusion. I have no doubt in saying that this thesis would not have come together without the intellectual discourses and analytical understanding imparted by Professor Farooqi and efforts made by him. I can proudly say that he is my mentor, my guide, my torchbearer.

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History and gave valuable suggestions regarding the research methodology and material collection. It is a gesture that I can never pay back.

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Last but not the least, I thank my mother Shahnaz Bano Naqvi for being the most loving and compassionate parent. Her prayers and blessings have always come to my rescue in difficult times. She relieved me of all the household duties so that I can concentrate completely on my research. She even helped me in reading certain Urdu texts. Love and gratitude to my two younger brothers, Husain and Imran, for assisting me in whatever manner they could especially in typing the first draft of my thesis and burning literally the mid night oil to do the needful. They are my life-support. I really don't have appropriate words to thank them and our mother. My revered father Syed Zafar Husain and my loving grandmother Raziya Khatun went to their heavenly abode while this thesis was in preparation. The void they have created in my life can never be filled. May Allah illumine their graves.

Allahabad   Samana Zafar

May 5, 2014

Dedicated to:

Razia Khatun

Syed Safdar Husain Naqvi, my (maternal) grandparents

and

Shahnaz Bano Naqvi

Syed Zafar Husain, my parents

CONTENTS

	Acknowledgement	*page* *i*
	Introduction	1
Chapter 1:	Iltutmish: Nomenclature and Early Life	16
Chapter 2:	Shamsuddin Iltutmish: Sovereign or Usurper?	38
Chapter 3:	The Making of a Sultan: Iltutmish's Relations with his adversaries, Internal Problems, and the Conquest of Hindustan	70
Chapter 4:	Foreign Powers at Home: Encounter with Jalaluddin Mangbarni, the Mongol problem and relations with the Caliph of Baghdad	116
Chapter 5:	Creation of an Administrative Structure: Iqta', Army, Capital, Currency, Apparatus for Governance and Judiciary	150
Chapter 6:	From Ghulam to Ghazi: The Nobility under Shamsuddin Iltutmish	206
Chapter 7:	Sufi and the Sultan: Reflection of Iltutmish's Image in the Medieval Sufi and Historical Literature	272
Chapter 8:	Cultural Attainments: Building Art and Literary Activities	303
	Conclusion	363
	Appendices:	
A:	Family-chart(genealogical table) of Sultan Iltutmish	369
B:	Firuz Iltutmish, the Shamsi noble	373
C:	Nasiruddin (Abu Bikr) Madini, the Shamsi noble	375
D:	The Sufi -Ulama Interface: Nature of Conflict in the First Half of the Thirteenth Century	377
	Select Bibliography	401

Tables

1: Twenty-five Shamsi Maliks and the positions held by them till the end of Iltutmish's reign (compiled on the basis of Minhaj's biographical sketch in Tabaqat twenty-two) *page* 212

2: List of the Shamsi officers mentioned in Tabaqat twenty-two on the basis of their geographical /tribal origin 222

3: Deployment of Turkish slave-officers at various strategic locations/territories of the Sultanate during the reign of Iltutmish 227

4: List of the prominent officers of Iltutmish with their status/ place of origin 233

5: List of the twenty-five Shamsi Maliks and their position during 1236-66 249

Maps

1: Physical Features of Central Asia in the Early Thirteenth Century *page* 13

2: Turkestan in the Thirteenth Century 27

3: Boundary of Delhi Sultanate in 1236 71

4: States of Western, North-western and Central India in the Thirteenth Century 89

5: North-west India at the time of the arrival of Prince Jalaluddin Mangbarni (1221) 122

INTRODUCTION

Among the early Sultans of Delhi, Shamsuddin Iltutmish (d.1236) was arguably the most outstanding in terms of military prowess, political adroitness, administrative acumen and cultural attainments. Scion of the famed Ilbari tribe of the Turks, Iltutmish had a humble and fairy tale beginning. Sold into slavery in his childhood, he rose to become the absolute monarch of a large and powerful empire by sheer dint of merit and rare manipulative skill. Like him the Sultanate of Delhi also had a modest beginning. When he ascended the throne of Delhi in 1210, Delhi was simply a small principality with no capital, no administrative infrastructure, no army and practically no boundaries. But when he closed his eyes quarter of a century later, the Delhi Sultanate had emerged as the most powerful Muslim state in the world. He single handedly gave this empire, in the words of K. A. Nizami, a capital, an independent state, a monarchical form of government and a governing class.[1] Delhi became the cultural capital of the Muslim world and came to be known as Hazrat- i- Delhi during the very life time of the Sultan. The attainments of its poets, scholars, historians, jurists, Sufi saints and architects became the talk of the Muslim world. Most significantly, the Delhi Sultanate thanks to the efforts of Iltutmish, became the sole place of refuge where Muslims of Central and Western Asia, suffering from the devastating consequences of Mongol onslaught on their lands, could find succuor and safe heaven.

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The second chapter examines the problem of succession of Iltutmish. The status of Iltutmish as a rightful occupant of the throne of Delhi has been a subject of debate among the historians. The debate has focused, apart from the circumstances leading to Iltutmish's accession to the throne, on the theory of sovereignty and the law of succession in Islam. Many modern historians assert that Iltutmish was a usurper who appropriated the crown from its lawful claimant. In this chapter, the question of sovereignty in Islam as well as diverse other related and relevant aspects such as the territorial extent of the Delhi Sultanate at the time of Iltutmish's elevation to the throne, the relative position and significance of Lahore and Delhi, the mutual tension between two different groups of nobles etc, have been discussed. In the light of the available evidences, it has been shown convincingly that Iltutmish was not a usurper. The chapter is divided into six sections. Section One gives a brief background of the circumstances in

which Aibak died and the views of contemporary and near contemporary historians on the coronation of Iltutmish at Delhi and how the term 'usurper' came into use while describing Iltutmish and his reign? In Section Two, the concept of monarchy in Islam has been discussed. What is the definition of the term 'legal' in the framework of succession to the throne in medieval India? What were the true criteria of being a de-jure ruler in the medieval period: capability, kinship, election or nomination? In the light of the rulings laid down by the theologians, I have attempted to see that whether or not Iltutmish fulfilled these stipulations? The third section focus on the political condition of India at the time of Aibak's death. What was the extant of territories controlled by Aibak and whether Iltutmish had seized a full-fledged empire created by Aibak or was the Sultanate, Iltutmish's own creation? In Section Four, the relative importance of the two cities: Lahore and Delhi for the newly established Turkish Empire in India has been assessed. It is worthwhile to see that whether Lahore, the seat of government in Aibak's regime, enjoyed the same status as Delhi or did Delhi acquire a superior status during Iltutmish's reign? Section Five examines the individuals who were supporting either the cause of Aram Shah or Iltutmish. Their aspirations, objectives and mutual jealously played a vital role in associating themselves with one of the contestants, or propping one against the other. The last section six is the conclusion of the chapter.

The third chapter deals with the internal problems of Iltutmish. The chapter outlines the saga of Iltutmish's struggle and success against his rivals, the failure of his adversaries to make common cause against the Sultan and the Sultanate, and the Sultan's success in carving out an extensive empire in the teeth of all the challenges and opposition. This chapter has six sections as well. Section I narrates the relation of Iltutmish with Tajuddin Yalduz, the ruler of Ghazni. Yalduz considered Iltutmish as his vassal and on the basis of his accession to the throne of

Ghazni, earlier the seat of Mu'izuddin Muhammad Ghori's government, he projected himself as Iltutmish's overlord. He also asserted his claim on the Indian territories of Mu'izuddin and attempted to reestablish the supremacy of Ghazni over India. How Iltutmish moved against Yalduz, bided his time and struck at the opportune moment have been described in this section. Section Two narrates Iltutmish's tussle with another Mu'izzi slave-officer, Nasiruddin Qabacha, the ruler of Uchch and Multan. Like Yalduz, Qabacha was a potential rival. Iltutmish could not become the sovereign of Hindustan without subduing him. The incidents which led to the subjugation of Qabacha and the calculated moves of Iltutmish against him are tackled in this section. The third section is on Bengal. One of the richest provinces of India, Bengal was important for Delhi Sultanate for various reasons, the most important being its horse-trade. It is well known that cavalry was the main strength of the army of Delhi Sultanate. According to Simon Digby, the Delhi Sultans always endeavoured to increase their supply of war animals and deprive their enemy of the same by restricting the access of horses to their territories. Bengal was a major centre of horse trade. Taking these and other related aspects into consideration, the confrontation of Iltutmish with the ruler of Bengal, Husamuddin Iwaz Khalji has been dealt in this section. Section Four is recounts the numerous battles Iltutmish fought with the Indian princes. Though comparatively lesser in scale and significance, success in these combats played a critical role in establishing Iltutmish's supremacy in India and in consolidating his position against his rivals. Section Five explains the reasons of the success of Iltutmish against all his adversaries, Turks and Indians. The sixth is the concluding section.

The fourth chapter deals with the external potentates and rivals of the Sultan. During the reign of Iltutmish, two significant events in term of foreign relations took place; the effect of both these events had important ramifications for the Delhi Sultanate. The first episode was the

arrival of Khwarazm Prince, Jalaluddin Mangbarni in the Indian sub-continent and the subsequent appearance of Mongols on the Indian frontiers in his trail. For some time the security and defense of Indian states was in jeopardy in view of the fact that the representatives of two great powers of Central Asia, the Khwarazmian and the Mongol, had placed their feet on the Indian soil. The other event of international significance was the arrival of the emissaries of the Khalifa of Baghdad to the court of Iltutmish with the deed of investiture (manshur) and the robe of honour (Khil`at). Theoretically, it buttressed the position of Sultan of Delhi as an independent ruling authority and raised the Sulatanat's status in the Muslim world. This chapter is divided into three sections. Section one deals with the incidents that occurred following the coming of Jalaluddin Mangbarni to Hindustan and its aftermath and their effects on Iltutmish and his adversaries. Section two is concerned with Iltutmish's efforts to gain the investiture from the Abbasid Caliph and the subsequent dispatch of the same from Baghdad. Section three presents the conclusion drawn from the two former sections.

The fifth chapter attempts to deal with the administration of the Sultanate during the reign of Iltutmish. Administration is an important constituent and a natural follow-up of a political conquest. The success of Iltutmish and his reign of twenty-six years did not depend merely on his political triumphs but the organization of the administrative structure of the Sultanate had a fair share in it as well. This chapter deals with the efforts of Iltutmish to provide efficient administration to his Sultanate and the measures he adopted to guarantee the inflow of both men and money for the service of the Empire. How he organized the Iqta', raised an efficient central army, created a sound monetary system for the state, the various administrative offices he introduced, his idea of imparting justice etc. have been dealt in this chapter. This chapter is divided into seven sections. Section one traces the history of Muslim administration and its

origin and development. The model of government adopted by the Ghaznavids and the Ghorids and their influence on the Sultanate administration has also been included in this section. Section Two discusses the origin and development of Iqta’ in its various forms and its adoption by Iltutmish while creating the administrative structure of his Empire. Iltutmish distributed two types of Iqta’s: large and small. The differences between these two categories of Iqta’s, the role of Iqtadars and Muqta’s, the mode of their appointment and promotion etc. have been described. Section Three deals with the armed forces of Iltutmish which served as the backbone of the Sultanate. Various constituents of the army such as cavalry, archery, infantry, elephant corps and their role have been elucidated in this section. Section Four is on the emergence of Delhi as the capital city during the reign of Iltutmish. The Sultan extended his patronage to various intellectuals, soldiers, Sufis, poets, men of letters, peasants and traders who migrated from Central and West Asia to India due to the Mongol onslaughts on these regions. The fifth section is on the monetary system created by Iltutmish. The reign of Iltutmish marks a water shed in the numismatic history of the Sultanate. Coins of gold, silver, copper were issued during his reign. The coins introduced by him, silver Tankah and billon Jital, remained in operation throughout the Sultanate period and continued up to the Mughal times. The silver Tankah is also regarded as the predecessor of modern rupee. The sixth section is on the theory of kingship of Iltutmish, his predilection for justice and the administrative apparatus of the Sultanate of Delhi. Section seven is the conclusion.

The sixth chapter discusses the nobility during the period of Iltutmish. The members of the ruling class or nobles, designated as Khan, Malik and Amir, governed the empire at the behest and on behalf of the Sultan. The success and failure of an individual Sultan depended to a very large extent on the administrative ability and military prowess of his nobility. The nobility

of the Delhi Sultanate was heterogeneous in character and comprised of different ethnic, religious and racial groups. This chapter also attempts to examine the nature and character of the nobles and officers of Iltutmish: their origin, composition, lifestyle and privileges, duties as well as the mode of their appointment, promotion and punishment. Who were the most important nobles during the reign of Iltutmish and what was the nature of their relations with each other and with the Sultan has also been explored in detail. The question of *Turk-i-Chihilgani* has been analyzed in the light of the account of the Turk- i- Chihilgani given by Ziyauddin Barani and the biographies of some of the Shamsi nobles furnished by Minhaj. The chapter contains five sections. The first section gives a brief history of the governing class in Muslim states including the practice during the Ummayyad and Abbasid period. How an exclusive governing class came into being, beginning of the recruitment of slaves as officers and its continuation in India has been described. The second section is on the Turkish slave-officers of Iltutmish. A large section of nobility during the period of Iltutmish comprised of Turkish slave officers known as Bandagan-i-Shamsi (slaves of Shamsuddin Iltutmish). They had the lion's share in the Sultanate bureaucracy. This section provides information about some of the prominent officers of Iltutmish. It also throws a great deal of light on the process of sale of the slaves, the mode of their training, the initial offices entrusted to them, the first military assignment given to them and their prospects of promotion. Section three gives an account the non- Turkish officers of Iltutmish. Although Iltutmish relied heavily on the efficacy of his senior slave officers, it does not mean that they were his only close associates. The list of Maliks furnished at the conclusion of Iltutmish's reign in Tabaqat twenty-one of Minhaj's *Tabaqat i Nasiri*, contains along with Turkish slave-officers, Maliks from diverse racial, ethnic, geographical and social milieu. This list evinces that of the twenty-one Maliks of Iltutmish, two had free status, three were free-born

Ghorian Maliks, two Khaljis, three old home nobles, two Qutbis, two Nasiri, one Bahai, three Shamsis and three probably immigrant Tajiks. Thus a large section of Iltutmish's nobility consisted of immigrant notables whether Tajiks, Ghoris, Khaljis or even Turks who were free-born. In this section, the non- Turkish members have been identified and attempt has been made to chalk out their position in the system of administration. Section four explores the question of *Turk i Chihilgani*. It is an oft-debated issue related to the nobility of Iltutmish. The meaning of this term is itself obscure. Modern historians have given assorted interpretations of this term owing perhaps to the ambiguous manner in which the term has been discussed in the primary sources. Endeavour is made to study the term in proper perspective and to bring out a meaning that is closer to truth as far as possible. Section five is the summarized account of the first four sections.

The seventh chapter attempts to analyze the religious leanings of Iltutmish and the factors responsible for Iltutmish's intimacy with the Sufis. Besides religious inclination, Iltutmish had sufficient reasons to be in the good books of the Sufis which have been discussed in the chapter. The chapter consists of five sections. Section one deals with the relations of the Sultan with the Sufis, recluses and pious men as reflected in Sufi and historical literature. Section Two deals with the reasons of the intimacy of the Sultan with the Sufis and his relations with the prominent Chishti saint of his time, Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki. The third section is on the Suhrawardi Sufis and their association with the court of the Sultan. The fourth section investigates the effect, if any, of the contacts with the men of piety on the administration of Delhi or policies of Iltutmish. The Sufis and Ulama were revered by the Sultan and their opinion were given due weight by him. Was the Sultan guided by the whims and fancies of the men of religion

or did he act on the basis of his own logical thinking? The last section is the conclusion of the earlier section.

The last and eighth chapter examines the cultural attainments of the Sultan. The Sultan's achievements in the domain of architecture, literature and education have been reviewed. The chapter is divided into six sections. Section one describes the salient features of Muslim and Indian architecture. Section two deals with the buildings constructed and renovated by the Sultan, namely Qutb Minar, Quwwatul Islam Mosque, his own tomb, the tomb of Nasiruddin Mahmud in Sultan Ghari, Kushk i Firozi, the Hauz i Shamsi etc., in Delhi. The third section focuses on the mosque at Ajmer, Arhai din ka Jhompra to which Iltutmish added a screen of seven arches in 1229-30. Section four is on the buildings constructed by Iltutmish in Badaun: the Badaun Mosque and the Shamsi Idgah. Some of the miscellaneous buildings with which the name of the Sultan has been associated are also mentioned in this section. The fifth section is on the literary activities during the reign of Iltutmish as well as Iltutmish's promotion of learning and education. The poets of the period, the historians attached to his court and other dignitaries and the institution of madrasah etc have been discussed in this section. The last section incorporates the concluding remarks.

The concluding chapter narrates the achievements and innovations of the reign of Iltutmish. A critical estimate of his rule has been attempted is done and Iltutmish's place in Medieval Indian history has been defined.

The thesis also consists of four appendices. Appendix A shows the family-chart of Sultan Iltutmish. Appendix B attempts a brief life sketch of Firuz Iltutmish, the Shamsi noble

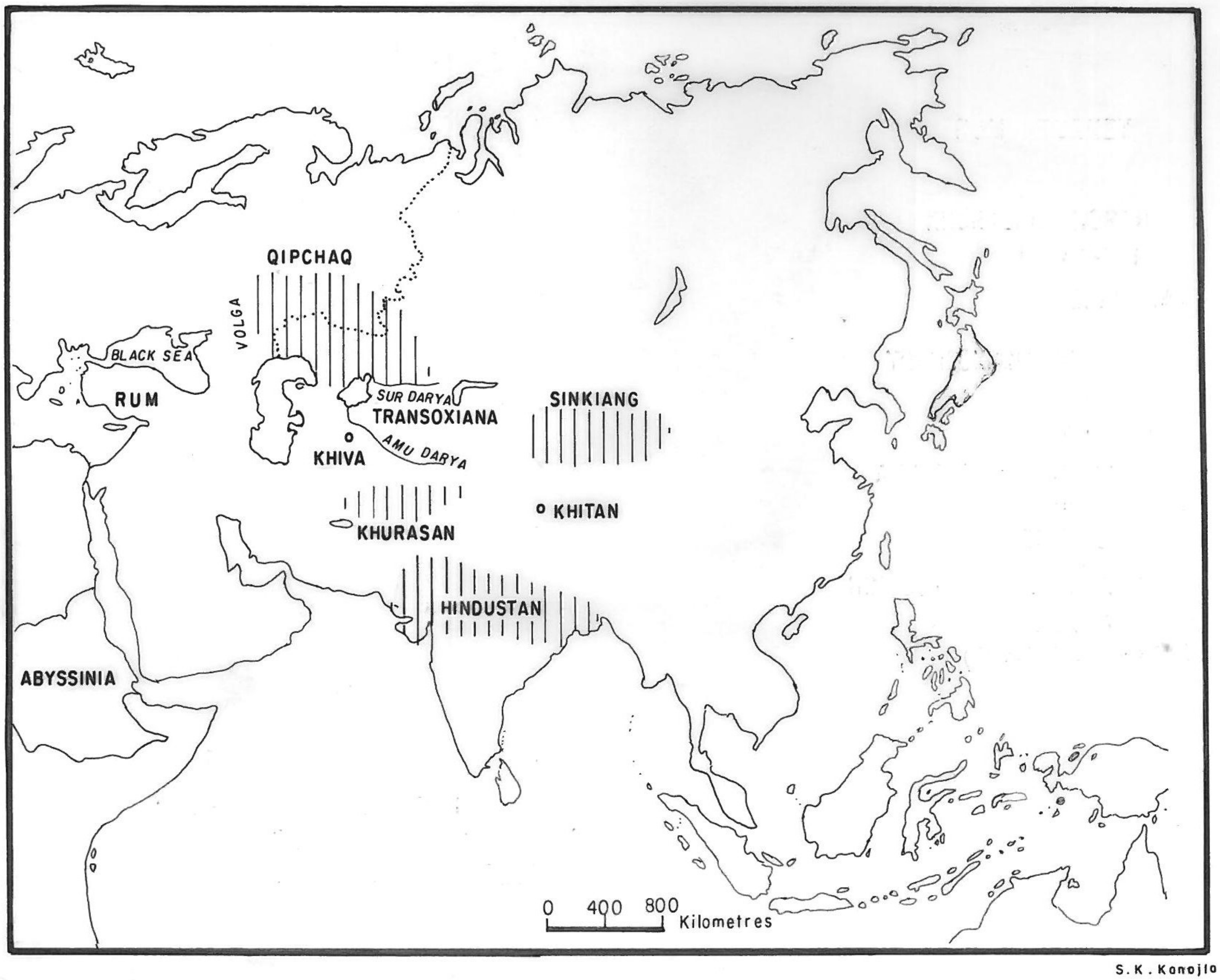
who belonged to Qipchaq region. Appendix C deals with the Shamsi noble Malik Nasiruddin Madini Shansabani who belonged to the oldest ruling dynasty of Ghor, the family of Shansab.

Appendix D examines the Sufi-Ulama interface in the first half of the thirteenth century in the light of the political ambitions, ideological disparity and personal pursuits of the persons involved. It also tries to explore the over-all relationship between these two sections of medieval Indian society: Sufis, the followers of *tariqat* (the path) and Ulama, the upholders of the Shariah. The first half of the thirteenth century saw the commencement of the Muslim rule in India. It would be interesting to see if the ruler had any self-interest in promoting both these groups or was there any attempt on their part even to pit one against the other? It has five sections. The meaning of the term Sufi and Aalim, as well as their etymology has been discussed. A brief outline of the prominent Sufi sects of the time and the ideology of the principal adherents of these sects as also their attitude towards the state which is vital to understand the Sufi-Ulama relationship in the first half of the thirteenth century has been narrated. The factors that motivated Iltutmish to rope in both these elements into his ambit and few instances of Sufi- Ulama strife in the first half of the thirteenth century etc. have also been dealt in this rather large appendix.

At this stage it is also pertinent to explain certain terms relating to the geographical locations and land revenue system that have been incorporated in various chapters of the thesis. In chapter five which is on the administration, certain terms like Ushr, Khums, Kharaj have been used. We know that the income of a Muslim state comes from the four taxes allowed by the Shariah: the tax on agricultural produce known as Kharaj and Ushr, poll tax on the non-Muslim subjects (zimmis) called Jizya, Khums or 1/5th of the booty captured in battle or produce from the mines, and income tax on the Muslim called Zakat. Ushr was calculated at the rate of 1/10th of the produce of land held by a Muslim or watered by natural means. The payment of Kharaj or

agricultural tax was mandatory for both the Muslims and non-Muslims. The fraction of produce charged as Kharaj was different on different categories of land and in different countries. In India, it is difficult to ascertain the proportion of produce taken by the state as Kharaj during the Sultanate period. Hasan Nizami and Minhaj tell us nothing about the agrarian matters. I. H. Qureshi suggests on the testimony of *Tarikh i Fakruddin Mubarakshah* that Sultan Qutbuddin Aibak left the landed property of the Muslims in their hands and abolished the Kharaj which he deemed as against the Shariat and the injunction of God and which amounted to one-fifth of the produce and fixed in some places the Ushr and in some other areas the nim- Ushr (1/20th of the produce).[2] In all probability, Kharaj, as one-fifth of the produce, continued as land revenue in the early Sultanate period. Alauddin Khalji (r.1296-1316) demanded the highest land revenue which was fifty percent of the gross produce.

Much more important from the point of view of this work is to explain certain geographical locations and ethnic groups. In chapter six we find references to nobles belonging to Khita, Qipchaq, Rum, etc. These terms need to be explained here in order to have a better understanding of Iltutmish's nobility. The information provided by Minhaj as regards the twenty five Shamsi slaves of Iltutmish reveals men of diverse geographical and ethnic origins. The largest number of Shamsi slaves, whose origins can be traced, belonged to the area known as Qipchaq. The term Qipchaq means that these men belonged to the group of Turkish tribes which occupied the steppes north of Black Sea and the Caspian. Albari, according to Peter Jackson, was a sub-group of the Qipchaq (or possibly of the Qangli who were closely related to them).[3] Khita'i generally means ethnic group Khitan from northern China. Qarakhita'i has been described by Irfan Habib as 'Black Chinese' of the Sinkiang region.[4] Qarakhita and Khita, however, must be taken as geographical areas and not ethnic groups. Khita and Qarakhita tribe had Mongolian



Map 1: Physical Features of Central Asia in the Early Thirteenth Century

antecedence. However, it can be surmised that whenever Minhaj refer to an officer/noble as Khita Turk or Qarakhita Turk[5], he probably means that the person concerned was a Turk settled in Khitan region. In the same vein, Rum signifies Turkey, Mawar an Nahr stand for Transoxiana, Khwarazm imply the Khiva region and Hindustan obviously means India north of the Vindhya. The term Habshi indicates an Abyssinian (belonging to Eritrea and Ethiopia which were a single country during this period). Tajik is the expression generally used for those nobles who were non-Turk and non- Arab or one who was of Arab blood born and brought up in Persia. Tajik in the first half of the thirteenth century was, by and large, used for the people of Central Asia and Khurasan (the eastern province of Persia which, unlike the modern times, comprised of the north-western part of Afghanistan under the Abbasids) who had migrated and settled in Hindustan following the Mongol upheaval in the thirteenth century.

For collection of data, I have consulted the libraries of University of Allahabad, the Departmental Library of Medieval and Modern History, University of Allahabad, Maulana Azad Library of Aligarh Muslim University, the Seminar Library of the Centre of Advanced Study in History, Aligarh Muslim University, the Delhi University Library and the Library of the Indian Council of Historical Research, New Delhi.

NOTES:

[1] Muhammad Habib and K. A. Nizami, *A Comprehensive History of India, vol. V, Part I: The Delhi Sultanate (AD 1206-1526)*, (New Delhi: People's Publishing House, 1996; first published, 1970), p. 222

[2] Ishtiaq Husain Qureshi, *The Administration of the Sultanate of Delhi* (New Delhi: Oriental Books Reprint Corporation, 1971), p. 113. The ordinance applied to the small population of Muslims in Lahore.

[3] Peter Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate: A Political and Military History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 63

[4] Irfan Habib, 'Formation of the Sultanate Ruling Class of the Thirteenth Century' in Irfan Habib (ed.) *Medieval India 1: Researches in the History of India 1200-1750* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000; first published, 1992), p. 10

[5] Minhaj-i-Siraj Juzjani, *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, translated into English by Major H. G. Raverty (Calcutta: The Asiatic Society, 1995; first published, 1881), vol. II, p. 731, 736, 746 & 749

CHAPTER ONE

Iltutmish: Nomenclature and Early Life

Treat Iltutmish well, for he will distinguish himself.[1]

Mu'izzuddin Muhammad Ghori to Qutubuddin Aibak

Iltutmish like many other slave-officers of the Early Sultanate Period was a Turk. His Turkish name especially its spelling and pronunciation has been a subject of debate among modern scholars. This comparatively lesser heard and unusual name has motivated the historians to interpret and spelt it in different ways. This chapter deals with the problem of nomenclature of Iltutmish and how its various interpretations came into being. It also traces the journey of the man from Turkistan to Ghazni and then to Delhi where he was finally purchased by Qutubuddin Aibak, and his subsequent elevation to the position of the governor (muqta') of Badaun. Iltutmish have divided this chapter into three sections: the first section deals with the discussion regarding the correct name of the Sultan, the second attends to the life of the ruler prior to his accession to the throne of Delhi, and the third section presents summary of the information derived from the first two sections.

I

This part of the chapter is concerned with the controversy regarding the personal name of Iltutmish. The elongated spelling of the name in Turkish has been interpreted differently by different writers. It seems that the initial discrepancy in the spelling of the name occurred by the modern editors while copying it from the original medieval text. Elphinston spelt the name as 'Altamish'[2] and Elliot as 'Altamsh.'[3] Raverty pronounced it as Iyaltimish.[4] Henry Beveridge who translated *Tarikh i Mubarakshahi* of Yahya Sarhindi accepted the form put forward by Raverty.[5] John Briggs, the translator of *Tarikh i Ferishta* accepted the spelling Altmish. According to him, it means sixty since Iltutmish was sold in sixty tumans in the slave market.[6] Brajendra Nath De used the form Altamsh in his translation of *Tabaqat- i- Akbari* originally written by Nizamuddin Ahmad. Brajendranath adopted Altamsh in place of Iyaltimish because in his opinion whatever may have been the spelling in Turkish, the spelling in Persian histories is 'التمشي [7] H.S. Jarett in his translation of *Ain i Akbari* retained the form Altmish.[8] On the basis of Badayuni's remark that the Sultan was so called because he was born on the night when the moon was eclipsed, Sir John Redhouse attempted a remote linguistic interpretation. He interpreted the word as 'Ai-tutulmish' or 'Ai-tutulmasi.'[9] Therefore there is no consensus of opinion among historians regarding the orthography of the Sultan's name.

In 1907, Barthold convincingly proved that Iltutmish (maintainer/sustainer of the kingdom) is correct. Profesor Barthold points out that an excellent manuscript of the *Taj ul Ma'asir* of Hasan Nizami, transcribed in 829 AH/ 1426 AD is available in the Library of St. Petersburg (code no. 578, f 218b). The spelling of the Sultan's name in the manuscript supported the reading 'tut" where the 'u' vowel mark is shown ایلتُتمس , though the dots on the last letter are missing.[10] Earlier in 1884 Lane-Poole had indicated that the correct spelling is 'Iltutmish' and not 'Altamish' but it has not found general acceptance then.[11] Also the epigraphs

and numismatic evidences furnished by Edward Thomas in 1870 accorded well with the name Iltutmish. Later, in 1227, Major E. de Zambaur in his list of the governors of al-Rayy gives the name of Iltutmish al-Turki as the governor of Rayy in 289 AH/ 902 AD.[12] In course of time, this form gained increasing acceptance among the historians. J. A. Boyle, translator of *Tarikh i Jahan Gusha prefer* to write it as Iltutmish meaning world maintainer.

In 1950, the Turkish historian Hikmet Bayur, the author of a *History of India* in Turkish revived this controversy about the name of Iltutmish. He published a long article with evidences to prove the correct form of the name of the Delhi Sultan is 'Iletmish'.[13] A decade later when Peter hardy wrote his book *Historians of Medieval India*, he included a postscriptum in the preface of his book. Following were his words in the postscript: "Hikmet Bayur has shown conclusively that the correct form of the name of the Delhi Sultan conventionally shown as Iltutmish is Iletmish. Failure to examine this article (Hikmet Bayur's 'Sultan Iletmis') in time has made inevitable the adoption of this monograph of the conventional but incorrect form."[14] It shows that historians started taking note of the above mentioned spelling and some of them accepted this as the right one.

Negating the theory put forward by Bayur, came the path- breaking article of Simon Digby in 1970. In the article, 'Iletmish or Iltutmish? A Reconsideration of the Name of the Dehli Sultan,' Digby on the basis of a host of sources- texts, monumental epigraphs and coins- proved the fact that the name is actually 'Iltutmish' and not 'Iletmish.' He made an exhaustive study of the documents and inscriptions consulted by Bayur and on the basis of those very arguments and some more, Simon Digby asserted his theory with great authority. He suggested that the word التمش Altamash or Altamish) as the form of the name became common in the historiographical tradition of the seventeenth century and later. In Indian usage, the Turkish term

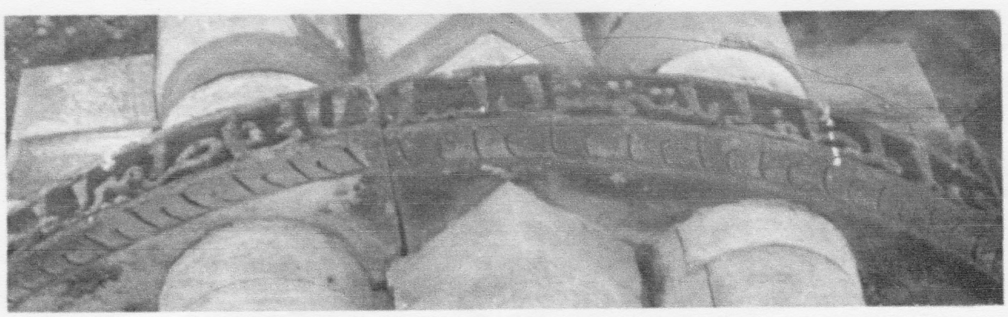
Altamish in seventeenth and eighteenth centuries meant the advance guard of the centre in the order of battle.[15] A false identification with this similar word may have influenced the pronunciation of the name of the Sultan.

On the basis of the readings cited from manuscripts and printed texts, Digby writes that in the available manuscripts of *Taj ul Ma'asir* of Hasan Nizami the personal name of the Sultan occurred only once, in the notice of his accession. In the British Museum manuscript, transcribed in 711 AH/ 1311 AD the name appears as ايلتمش . There are two teeth between lam (ل) and mim (م), the first one dotted while the second undotted as also the 'ya' after the 'alif.'[16] He also refers to the manuscript cited by Barthold which is available in St. Petersburg, where the reading 'tut' is clearly evident. As regards *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, Digby consulted the manuscript of British Museum Add 26 189, assigned to the fourteenth century. It bears four spellings: التتمش (two dots over the second 'tooth'; folio Ia), التتمش (two dots between the two teeth, folio 176a) and السمش (undotted teeth; folio 179b). However, in the heading of the chapter which marked the beginning of the reign of the Sultan (folio 175b), it is clearly written التتمش .[17] Here the formality of the occasion required that the name must be properly written while at other places little bit room for freedom can be allowed. Besides, the spelling on folio 176a and 179b are the part of the two qasidas penned by Minhaj in praise of the Sultan the rhyming scheme in these verses, according to Sir Denison Ross, required Iltutmish or Iletmish (ايلتمش .[18] The latter spelling has not been found within the qasidas in different/ various manuscripts which points to the fact that التتمش Iltutmish is the correct form of the spelling. For Sadiduddin Muhammad Awfi, *Jawami 'ul Hikayat wa Lavami 'ul Rivaayat* Simon Digby depended on M. Moin edition of the opening anecdotes with the preamble and dedication to the Sultan. Muin based his work upon four manuscripts in which three belonged to the thirteenth and

fourteenth centuries and one to the sixteenth century. The readings of the two manuscripts one of them was of 717 AH, was ايلتتُمش in the other two ايلتتمش without a *pesh* (diacritical mark) was printed.[19] Digby also cites a manuscript of Fakr i Mudabbir's work *Adab ul Harb wa Shuja* preserved in the British Museum possibly of sixteenth century. In this manuscript the name is written as ايلتتمش [20] *Tarikh i Firuzshahi* of Barani is not of much help. The personal name of the Sultan is mentioned only once by its editor Abdul Rashid where he writes التمش . There also its absence in other manuscripts led Simon Digby to conclude that it was probably the copyist error.[21] Ibn i Battuta pronounced the word as Lalmish exhibiting the difficulty in speaking out an unusual name.[22] One important work in this regard is *Futuh al Salatin* by Isami. It is composed in verse. It is translated twice, once by Agha Mahdi Husain (1938) on the basis of India Office Manuscript and later by A.S. Usha (1948) who also made use of other manuscript in a private collection in Hyderabad. In this poem, the same metric scheme is applicable as is available in the two qasidas reproduced in *Tabaqat i Nasiri* (elucidated by Denison Ross) where either Iletmish ايلتمش or Iltutmish التتمش is required. The name occurs in the poem no less than sixteen times. Digby consulted the India Office Manuscript which was transcribed somewhere between fifteenth and sixteenth century. In two instances in this manuscript, the name is spelt in rubrics التمش . In thirteen places, including every occasion where is it used in verses, the name is evidently written and dotted in the manuscript as التتمش ; nowhere the reading ايلتمش occurs.[23] Isami was the descendant of the nobility of Delhi. His grandfather held the post of sipahsalar (commander) during the reign of Sultan Balban (1266-86 AD). Therefore, Simon Digby opines that the fourteenth century, among the nobility of the earlier Delhi Sultanate, the name was used/ disciplined as Iltutmish.



Pl. Ia. Ar̲hā'ı din kā jhompr̲ā, *Ajmer. The northern minaret from the courtyard of the mosque.*



Pl. Ib. The name of the Sulṭān, Īltutmish, *in the inscription on the northern minaret, north side.*

Figure 1

Courtesy: Simon Digby

With reference to epigraphic evidence, Digby alludes to the plates published by J. Horovitz bearing inscriptions of the reign of Iltutmish. Horovitz spelt the Sultan's name in these inscriptions as Iltutmish (elongated I)/ Iltutmish. Simon Digby mentions particularly an inscription which runs in a thin band around the northern minaret of the Arhai din ka Jhompra at Ajmer. In this inscription the name of the Sultan is clearly as اٮلتتمش (fig. 1) - the two 'tas' having visible dots with undotted 'ya'. Digby also asserts that the inscription was not restored upside down during the conservation of the Archeological Survey of India as suggested by Hikmet Bayur.[24] Therefore, inscriptions on the Sultanate monuments make it amply clear that the name was unmistakably Iltutmish.

As far as the legends on the coins are concerned the two teeths are often visible between the 'lam' and 'mim'. The two pairs of dots, however, are invariably missing. The reason, Digby opines is that Muslim coinages were inspired by the undotted or scantily dotted coins of the Umayyad and the Abbasid dynasty and it is hard to find a completely and correctly dotted Muslim coin of a date before the sixteenth century. Nelson Wright concludes that no less than four forms of the name appear on the coins, viz., التمش - ایلتمش - التتمش and ایلتتمش - the last of the four is by far the most common.[25] Simon Digby examined the silver tankahs present in the coin trays of the British Museum. It was those silver tankahs which bears the name of the Sultan (including a posthumous coin issued in the reign of Sultan Raziya). On seven of them, the readings are السمس ; one reads الٮمس and four read اٮلسمس .[26] One silver tankah originally published by Edward Thomas and reproduced by Nelson Wright has the legends in Kufic script.[27] It demonstrates that the second (undotted) tooth is not a part of the mim (fig. 2) as wrongly asserted by Bayur who while justifying the presence of a visible second



Pl. IIa. Silver ṯankā *with Kūfic script Arabic legend.* Al-sulṭān/al-mu‘aẓẓam shams/al-dunyā wa’l-dīn/[abu’l-]muẓaffar Iltutmish/as-sulṭānı yamīn khalīfat/allāh nāṣīr [amīr]/[al-mu’minīn]. *Reverse.* (*After H. N. Wright.*)

Figure 2

Courtesy: Simon Digby



Pl. IIb. Billon coin with Nāgarī script legend dated V.S. 1283 and 624 A.H. [Sr]ī sultā[n]/Lititimi/-si sam(vata) 1283. *Reverse.*
(After H. N. Wright.)

Figure 3

Courtesy: Simon Digby

'tooth', maintains that the second is the beginning of the letter mim. It infers that the second 'tooth' is the letter ta (ت) which suggests that there are two tas in the name. Digby also draws attention to a coin in Nagari legend. It reads Lititimisi (fig. 3).[28] Nelson Wright opines that there was (I) before the inscription and it should read (I)lititimisi and whereas Simon Digby considers it a result of metathesis in the vernacular pronunciation. However, the two 'ti' corresponding to the 'ta' in Arabic script confirms the fact that the name is Iltutmish.

Therefore, the evidences from the manuscripts, architectural epigraphs and coin-legends support the reading of the name as Iltutmish. It is rightly observed by Digby that there was a general tendency, both in transcription and in monumental and numismatic epigraphy that certain letters were omitted and words were shortened. But it was not the trend to introduce superfluous letters. Therefore, "the abrasion of ايلتتمش and التتمش to التمش is not surprising but the sporadic appearance of ايلتتمش , التتمش both in epigraphs and manuscripts (the later often copied some centuries later), were supposedly corrupted from a correct form التمش -invariably a reduplication of the ta- is surely an improbable process."[29]

In addition to these proofs, a number of qasidas (poems written in praise of someone) composed by the contemporary chroniclers and poets in which the name of the Sultan occurs also throw light on this issue. The metre, in these verses, requires in order to rhyme properly. A qasida addressed to Iltutmish by Maulana Burhanuddin on the occasion of the arrival of the investiture of the Caliph (AD 1229) has the name as Iltutmish.

Bu'l muzaffar Iltutmish k' u bi- hukm az tir tir

Bugelharanad dar favalash me- biyayad tir tir[30]

The form Iltutmish suits the metre.

Minhaj has composed poems where the scansion needs double ‘t’. In praise of Sultan Bahram Shah, he says:

Agar sultani hind ast irs duda Shamsi

Be-hamdu illah ‘z farzandaan tui Iltutmish shani[31]

Again, in praise of Sultan Nasiruddin he says:

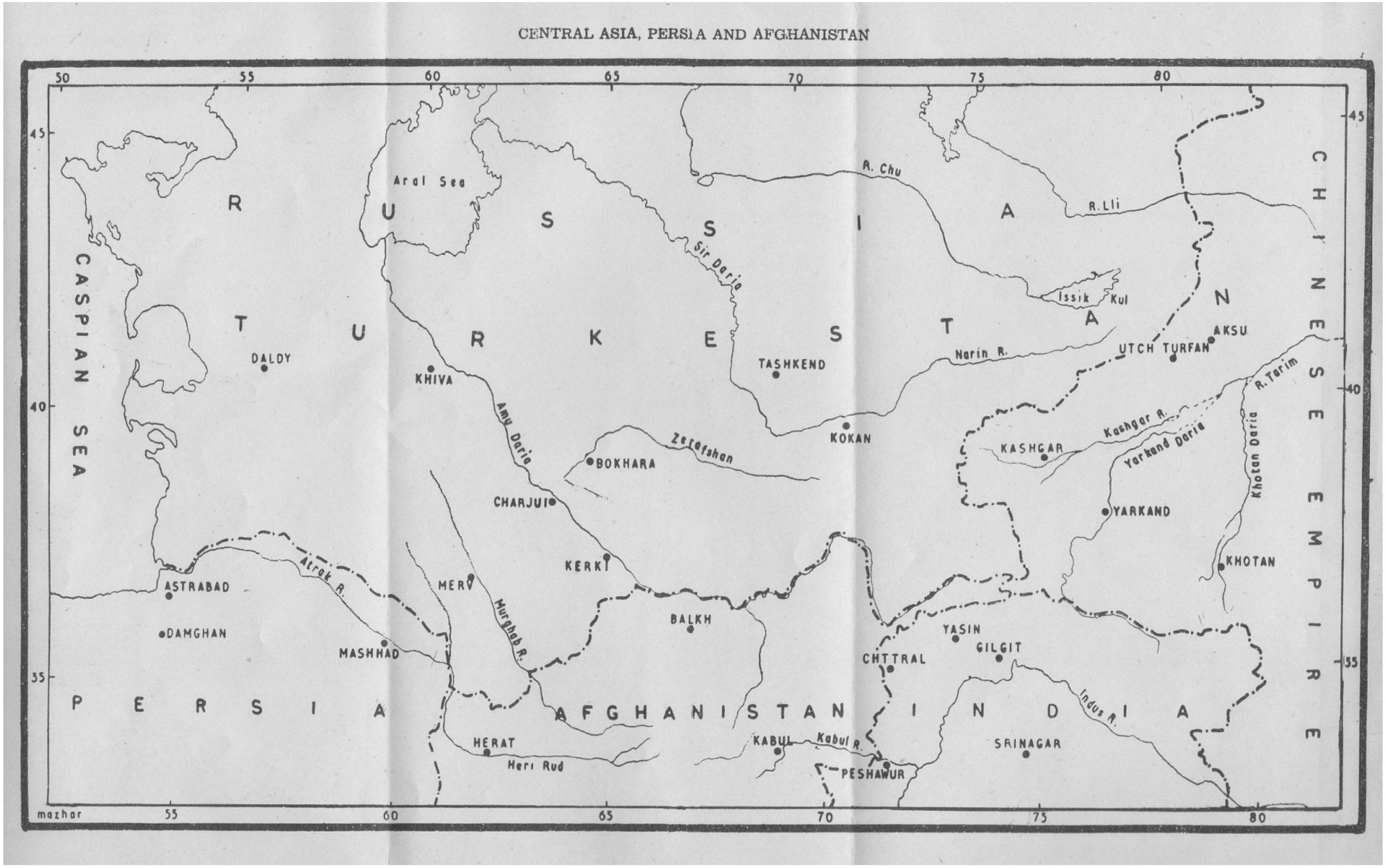
An Shahansha-Iltutmish ki Hatim bazl o Rustam kushish ast

Nasir ud Dunya wa din Mahmud bin Iltutmish ast[32]

The qasidas and their rhyming scheme thus supplement the evidences available in literacy, epigraphic and numismatic artefacts. It further confirms that the most appropriate spelling of the name of the Sultan is “Iltutmish.”

II

Shamsuddin Abul Muzaffar Iltutmish’s early life is obscure but the available evidence indicates that he was a scion the Ilbari tribe of Turkistan. Iltutmish was born sometime between 574- 577 AH/ 1179-82 AD.[33] According to Nizamuddin Ahmad, his father Ilam Khan was the chief of his tribe. Minhaj’s remarks that Ilam Khan had ‘numerous kindred, relations, dependents and followers,’[34] testify the assertion of Nizamuddin Ahmad. Ferishta writes that from his mother side, Iltutmish was a descendent from the noble family of Khitta.[35] From his childhood, Iltutmish demonstrated signs of intelligence and goodness of disposition to a great degree. Ferishta writes that in his youth, he was the favorite of his father.[36] These virtues became the



Map 2: Turkestan in the Thirteenth Century

This map has been taken from Muhammad Habib and K. A. Nizami, *A Comprehensive History of India, vol. V, Part I: The Delhi Sultanate (AD 1206-1526)* (New Delhi: People's Publishing House, 1996; first published, 1970)

cause of estrangement with his brothers. According to some other contemporary observers, it was his cousins (uncle's son) who became jealous of him. Owing to hatred and envy, the brothers decided to get rid of Iltutmish.[37] Under the pretence of watching a herd of horses, they took him away from his parents and sold him to certain merchants.[38] The merchants brought him to Bukhara and sold him to one of the kinsmen of Sadr i Jahan (ecclesiastical head) of Bukhara and for some time, Iltutmish spend his days with his highly respectable family. Ferishta writes that under his master Iltutmish received a liberal education.[39] Nizamuddin Ahmad also informs that for sometimes Iltutmish received kind treatment and training in the family of generous people.[40] Minhaj has narrated a very interesting story about Iltutmish during his stay with the relative of Sadr i Jahan which was perhaps related by Sultan Iltutmish himself. The story goes as follows: once a member of the family gave Iltutmish some money and ordered him to buy grapes from the market. On the way to the market, Iltutmish lost the money. Out of fear of punishment that he would receive at the hands of his master, he began to cry. Seeing this, a durvesh took him by the hands and purchased some grapes for him. In return, he took the promise from Iltutmish that whenever he would attain sovereignty, he would ever regard the pious men and men of piety with reverence and heal their wounds.[41]

From the family of sadr i jahan, Iltutmish was purchased by a merchant called Bukhara Haji. Subsequently another merchant by the name of Jamaluddin 'chust qaba' (Tight Tunic) purchased Iltutmish from Bukhara Haji and brought him to the city of Ghazni. No sooner than he was brought to the city that Iltutmish became the talk of Ghazni. In those days no turk of more handsome face, intelligence, sagacity and commendable quality had been brought to the capital. His arrival was reported to Mu'izzuddin Muhammad Ghori. The king ordered that a price should be fixed for him. The sum of a thousand dinars of pure Rukhni (gold refined) gold was specified

for both Iltutmish and another slave commonly known as Aibak[42] (do not confuse him with Sultan Qutubuddin Aibak). Jamaluddin did not agree to sell Iltutmish on that price. The Sultan, in turn, prohibited his sale in Ghazni. After staying a year in Ghazni, Jamaluddin returned back to Bukhara along with Iltutmish and for another three years, he remained in Bukhara.

It is written in *Siyar ul Arifin* that after the return of Jamaluddin to Bukhara, he went to Baghdad on a commercial mission and Iltutmish accompanied him. Iltutmish was fifteen at that time. During his stay in Bukhara Shahabuddin Suhrawardi, the real founder and promoter of Suhrawardi sect, saw him and predicted about his bright future in the presence of Shaikh Auhad Kirmani.[43] Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya asserted that Sultan Shamsuddin came to know both Shaikh Shihabuddin and auhad Kirmani and one of them had predicted that he (Iltutmish) would became king.[44] (For detailed study about Iltutmish's association with the sufis, see chapter 7 & 8). Isami is also of the view that Iltutmish had stayed in Baghdad for some period. We know that that when Hamiduddin Nagori was summoned to the court of Iltutmish on the issue of sam'a (details in chapter 8), he had asked the Sultan to remember the time he spent in Baghdad where once Iltutmish committed one whole night in the service of the sufis. Qazi Hamiduddin was referring to a sam'a meeting held in Baghdad in which the Qazi himself was present. In that meeting, Iltutmish had spent the whole night cutting off the burnt part of the candles with a pair of scissors.[45] These incidents point to the fact that Iltutmish had resided in Baghdad for some time during his adolescence. After staying in Bukhara for three years (during which Jamaluddin also went to Baghdad), Jamaluddin Muhammad returned to Ghazni a second time. He lived there for another one year but no one took the courage of buying Iltutmish due to the ban imposed upon his scale by Sultan Mu'izzuddin. This time Qutubuddin Aibak was present in Ghazni where he had gone to attend on Muhammad Ghori after campaign against Nahrwalah (593 AH/ 1197

AD).[46] After hearing the story, Qutubuddin Aibak exhibited his interest in purchasing Iltutmish. He sought the permission from the Sultan who replied that since the sale of Iltutmish was prohibited in Ghazni, let him be taken to Delhi where he could be purchased. Aibak instructed Nizamuddin Muhammad[47] to remain at Ghazni for transacting some business and requested that on his return he should bring merchant Jamaluddin and Iltutmish to Delhi. As directed, Nizamuddin on his return brought Jamaluddin along with his slaves, Iltutmish and Aibak (as mentioned earlier, we should not confuse him with Qutubuddin Aibak) to Delhi. These two Turk slaves of Jamaluddin were purchased by Qutubuddin Aibak for a sum of one lac jitals.[48] The slave Aibak received the name Tamghaj and was made amir of Tabarhindah.[49] He was killed in the engagement that took place between Tajuddin Yalduz and Qutubuddin Aibak.

Shamsuddin Iltutmish, after sometime was appointed sar i jandar (chief of the jandars or guards) by Qutubuddin Aibak. He continued to rise in rank and dignity. Qutubuddin would address Iltutmish as his son.[50] Soon he was raised to the position of Amir-i shikar. He was also entrusted he charge of the fort of Gwalior sometime after its surrender in 1200.[51] In Aibak's next major Indian campaign, the conquest of Kalinjar (599 AH/ 1203 AD), Iltutmish played a major role. Hasan Nizami writes, 'the emperor Shamsuddin (Shamsud Dunya wad Din) set out towards Kalinjar under the sun-touching and World adorning banners…..Signs of victory and conquest were evident on the luster of his sword and the blade of his sabre.'[52] It was perhaps the first battle on the Indian soil in which Iltutmish's presence has been noted by the contemporary historians. Hasan Nizami has praised the gallantry and wisdom of both Qutubuddin Aibak and Iltutmish in lofty tone while mentioning the expedition. He compared the good qualities of both these monarchs and stated that both of them participated in the offensive against Kalinjar. After Gwalior, Iltutmish acquired the town of Baran (modern Bulandshahr) and its dependencies.

Subsequently, impressed by the bravery, valour and administrative acumen of Iltutmish, Aibak conferred upon him fief of Badaun.[53] During his governorship at Badaun, Iltutmish demonstrated exemplary concern for the welfare of the people. He exhibited keen interested in constructing buildings of public utility and left a last influence for his generosity and kindness on the heart of the people of Badaun (for the constructional activities of Iltutmish in Badaun, see chapter 9).

When Mu'izzuddin returned to India during the Khokhar expedition of 1205 AD, he ordered Qutubuddin to present himself on the scene of action along with his forces. Iltutmish joined his master with his retinue of Badaun. In the combat against khokhars, Iltutmish's valour and intrepidity attracted the attention of the Sultan itself. Hasan Nizami writes, 'the great sultan (Shams ud Dunya wad Din) mounted on his stead, rushed into the battlefield and attacked the enemy like a leopard and leapt into the deep waters of the combat like a crocodile. His horse had the speed and appearance of the lightening, and like a salamander he regarded the fire of battle as a plaything…..With his glittering sword he swiftly dispatched a number of humbler men into the fire of hell. The heads of the chiefs of the army of the Khokhars hang on the spear of Khatt like flags.'[54] Impressed by the intrepidity of the young man, Mu'izzuddin inquired about him.[55] Informed about Iltutmish, he conferred a robe of honour upon him and advised Aibak to treat him well for he (Iltutmish) would one day make a mark for himself. According to Minhaj, the Sultan further directed that the deed of his freedom should be drawn forth with and thus conferred upon him the status of a free man[56] (Further details on the manumission issue are discussed in the next chapter).

Iltutmish was holding the charge of the governor of Badaun when Qutubuddin Aibak died at Lahore and he got a call from the nobility at Delhi to come thither and assume sovereign status.

III

It can therefore be concluded that the correct name of the Sultan is Iltutmish. In the new edition of the Encyclopedia of Islam,[57] the new form Iltutmish has been given precedence over the rest of the spellings. He belonged to a distinguished family. But fortune carries him to the slave market where he found himself being sold to Qutubuddin Aibak, the slave- officer of Mu'izzuddin Muhammad Ghori. This journey as a warrior begins thereafter. Completely cut off from his family, the only strength he now had with him was his determination and will-power to make a mark for himself. Whether he succeeded in his pursuit or not we will be seen in the following chapters.

NOTES:

[1] Minhaj-i-Siraj Juzjani, *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, translated into English by Major H. G. Raverty (Calcutta: The Asiatic Society, 1995; first published, 1881), vol. I, p. 605

[2]. Muhammad Habib and K. A. Nizami, *A Comprehensive History of India, vol. V, Part I: The Delhi Sultanate (AD 1206-1526)*(New Delhi: People's Publishing House, 1996; first published, 1970), p. 209

[3] H. M. Elliot and John Dowson, *The History of India as Told by Its Own Historians* (Delhi: Low Price Publications, 2008; first published, 1867-77), vol. 2, p. 237 & p. 320

[4] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 597

[5] Yahya bin Ahmad Sarhindi, *Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi*, translated into English by Henry Beveridge (Delhi: Low Price Publications, 2010), p. 16

[6] Muhammad Qasim Hindu Shah Ferishta, *Tarikh-i Ferishta*, translated into English by John Briggs as *History of the Rise of Muhammadan Power in India* (Delhi: Low Price Publications, 2006; first published, 1829) vol. I, p. 116

[7] Khwajah Nizamuddin Ahmed, *Tabaqat- i- Akbari*, translated into English by Brajendra Nath De (Delhi: Low Price Publications, 1992, first publication, 1911), vol. I. p. 62

[8] Abul Fazl Allami, *Ain-i-Akbari*, translated into English by Colonel H. S. Jarrett (Delhi: Low Price Publications, 2011, first published, 1927), vol. II. p.307-08

[9] On being consulted by Edward Thomas to throw some light on the issue of the name in the light of the remark of Abdul Qadir Badayuni, Redhouse explained, "Taking Badayuni's paragraphs as text, I may point out that though ای 'Ai' means moon and تتمش 'tutmish' may stand for توتمش 'tootmish' 'he took, seized, eclipsed'-the latter word in the passive form, توتلمش tootulmish 'it was eclipsed,' etc., being always employed to express the phenomenon of an eclipse, as ای توتلمش Ai-tootulmish 'the moon is or was eclipsed,' ای توتلمسی Ai-tootulmasi' an eclipse of the moon'- still the 'ل' (lam) of our word is out of the required place. Badayuni's remark's may be one of those eastern guesses, one so often meets with, and really beside the mark; but taking it as it stands, and weighing also the Sanskrit transcription Lititimisi, I would suggest that the 'lam' has become misplaced by the transcribers, and that the name was really one of the two passive compounds shown above, the 'u'(elongated) being dropped in writing, as it often found in Indian Turki Lexicons. This would make ایتتلمشAitutulmish or ایتتلمسیAitutulmasi (without elongation in 'u'); this later being nearer to the Sanskrit transcription, and to the Persian *girifte mah,* viz., 'dy-tutulmasi,' 'eclipse of the moon.' To be correct, this should be written in two words ای تتلمسی Ai-tutulmasi; or more correctly still with an elongated u, as ای تو تلمسی Ai-tootulmasi." Extract taken from Edward Thomas, *The Chronicles of the Pathan Kings of Dehli* (Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Oriental Publishers, first Indian edition, 1967), p. 44[in entire sentence 'oo' represented elongated 'u'].

[10] W. Barthold, 'Iltutmys', *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenlandischen Gesellschaft (ZDMG),* Leipzig, 1907, p. 193

[11] Ibid, p. 192

[12] *Manuel de Genealogie et de Chronologie pour l' histoire de l' Islam*, Hanover, 1927, p. 44 as cited in H. Nelson Wright, *The Coinage and Metrology of the Sultans of Delhi* (New Delhi: Oriental Books Reprint Corporation, first Indian edition,1974), p. 70

[13] Bayur worte this article in reply to the review of his work by Fuat Koprulu. In the article, he wanted to justify the usuage.

[14]Peter Hardy, *Historians of Medieval India* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Limited, 2011; first published, 1960), p. xv

[15] Simon Digby, 'Iltutmish or Iletmish? A Reconsideration of the Name of the Dehli Sultan,' *Iran*, vol. 8, 1970, p. 58

[16] Ibid, p. 59. Bayur relies for his theory on the abstract given by Elliot and Dowson which has 'Altamsh.' The original text used by Henry Elliot is now inaccessible.

[17] Ibid, p. 59. For *Tabaqat i Nasiri*, Bayur consulted a nineteenth century printed edition from Calcutta and a manuscript of unspecified age available in the library of Istanbul.

[18] Sir E. Denison Ross as cited in Simon Digby, op. cit., p. 60

[19] Simon Digby, p. 60. Bayur cites a manuscript of unspecified age available in Istanbul.

[20] Ibid, p. 60. Hikmet Bayur allocates importance to a sixteenth or seventeenth century India Office manuscript of this work.

[21] Ibid

[22] Ibn-i- Battuta, *The Rehla of Ibn-i-Battuta*, translated into English by Agha Mahdi Husain (Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1976; first edition, 1953), p. 32

[23] Ibid, p. 61. Usha throughout has written the name as اِلتُتمِش (Iltutmish).

[24] For complete discussion on epigraphs available on monuments, see Simon Digby, pp. 61-62

[25] Nelson Wright, p. 70

[26] Simon Digby, p. 63

[27] Nelson Wright, op. cit., p.17, no 49K, Pl. XXII. Kufic script is the earliest script in which the Quran was written. It originated in the city of Kufa, the administrative capital of Hazrat Ali (a. s.) who is the first Imam of Shias and the fourth Caliph.

[28] Edward Thomas, op. cit., p. 74, no. 44; Nelson Wright, p. 30, nos 121-22, cf 122A

[29] Simon Digby, p. 59

[30] Simon Digby, p. 64

[31] Muhammad Aziz Ahmad, *Political History and Institutions of the Early Turkish Empire of Delhi (1206-1290 A.D.)*(New Delhi: Oriental books reprint corporation, first Indian edition, 1972; first published, 1949) p. 156

[32] Ibid. Also see *A Comprehensive History of India, vol. V, Part I: The Delhi Sultanate (AD 1206-1526),* op.cit., p. 209

[33] When Qutubuddin Aibak went to Ghazni (where he saw Iltutmish for the first time) after the Nahrwalah campaign of 593 AH/ 1197 AD, Jamaluddin Chust Qaba the merchant who sold Iltutmish was residing in Ghazni for about a

year, i.e., he came to Ghazni in 592 AH/ 1196 AD. prior to that, Jamaluddin was in Bokhara for a period of three years during 589-592 AH/ 1193-96 AD. In this period, according to *Siyar ul Arifin*, Jamaluddin went to Baghdad for trade and commerce and Iltutmish went along with him. At that time, Iltutmish was fifteen years old. See Hamid bin Fazlullah Jamali Kamboh, *Siyal ul Arifin*, translated into Urdu by Muhammad Ayub Qadri (Lahore: Urdu Science Board, 1989; first published, 1976), p. 157. If Iltutmish was fifteen years old in 589-592 AH/ 1193-96 AD, we can safely surmise that he was born between 574-577 AH/ 1179-82 AD and was thus almost of the same age as Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya (1181-1262). If we believe that Iltutmish was born sometime between 1179-82 AD, it can be said that when Iltutmish was brought to the slave market of Ghazni for the second time in 592 AH/ 1197 AD, he was between the age group of 15-18 years. When he ascended the throne of Delhi in 607 AH/ 1210 AD, he was approximately between 28-31 years.

[34] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 599

[35] Ferishta, vol I, p. 116

[36] Ibid

[37] This story is strikingly similar to the story of Hazrat Yusuf (Prophet Joseph) related in the Holy Quran. Yusuf was also pushed into the well by his brothers out of sheer jealousy. Later on, he was also sold into slavery. See The Holy Quran, surah (chapter) XII

[38] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 599. Ferishta writes that one day while hunting the brothers stripped Iltutmish and sold him to a travelling merchant. See Ferishta, p. 116. Nizamuddin Ahmad says that Iltutmish's brothers and according to another tradition, his nephews, took him to some garden for amusement and then sold him by force to a merchant. *Tabaqat- i- Akbari*, p. 62

[39] Ferishta, p. 116

[40] *Tabaqat- i- Akbari*, p. 62

[41] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 600

[42] Ibid, p. 601. Nizamuddin writes that the price of each of them was fixed at one thousand Rukni dinars. *Tabaqat- i- Akbari*, p. 62

[43] *Siyar ul Arifin,* p. 157

[44] Amir Hasan Sijzi, *Fawa'idul Fu'ad*, translated into English by Bruce B. Lawrence (New York: Paulist Press, 1992), p. 318

[45] Isami, *Futuh al Salatin,* translated into English by Agha Mahdi Husain (London: Asia Publishing House, 1977), vol. II, p. 217

[46] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 516 & p. 600; Hasan Nizami is of the opinion that Qutubuddin went to Ghazni after the Delhi campaign (1192 AD). See Hasan Nizami, *Taj ul Ma'asir*, translated into English by Bhagwat Saroop (Delhi: Saud Ahmad Dehlavi, 1998), p. 114

[47] Nizamudin Muhammad was an officer of Qutubuddin Aibak. Later when Qutubuddin Aibak moved to Ghazni against Yalduz, he dispatched the same officer to Firuz Koh in 605 AH /1208-09 AD probably to request for the deed of manumission and scarlet of canopy of state from Sultan Mahmud (d. 1210). See *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 398

[48] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, pp. 602-03. Ferishta is of the opinion that at Delhi, Qutubuddin Aibak purchased Iltutmish for 50,000 pieces of silver. Ferishta, p. 116. According to Nizamuddin Ahmad, each of the two slaves was sold for one lac jitals each. See *Tabaqat- i- Akbari*, p. 63

[49] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 603. This was certainly not the first office of Aibak Tamghaj. He could not be made a governor straightaway for that was not the usual practice. He must have served on other smaller offices, not mentioned by Minhaj, before been promoted as the amir of Tabarhindah.

[50] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 603; *Tabaqat- i- Akbari*, p. 63

[51] Minhaj has not mentioned the date of the surrender of Gwalior. K. A. Nizami on the authority of *Tarikh i Fakruddin Mubarak Shah* has written that Gwalior capitulated in 597AH/ 1200 AD. Fakr i Mudabbir as quoted in *A Comprehensive History of India, vol. V, Part I: The Delhi Sultanate*, p. 171 & p. 212

[52] *Taj ul Ma'asir,* p. 230

[53] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 604; Badaun was conquered by Aibak after the conquest of Kalinjar and Mahoba. Kalinjar surrendered on 20 Rajab, 599 AH/ 4 April, 1203. See *Taj ul Ma'asir,* p. 242. Badaun was therefore captured in 1203 AD. In the early Sultanate period, the fief of Badaun held the same position as enjoyed by Bengal and Deccan in the Mughal period. Only important officials were appointed to it and it was the largest and most important iqta' in the kingdom.

[54] *Taj ul Ma'asir,* pp. 263-64; also see *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, pp. 604-05

[55] Mu'izzuddin failure to recognize Iltutmish implies that though in Ghazni he was impressed by what he had heard about Iltutmish as a slave, he had not seen or met him personally. The price for Iltutmish must have therefore been fixed by the brokers.

[56] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 605; also see *Tabaqat- i- Akbari*, p. 64

[57] A. S. Bazmee Ansari, 'Iltutmish', in B. Lewis, V. L. Menage, Ch. Pellat and J. Schacht (eds.), *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edition, vol. III, (London: Luzac & Co., 1986), pp. 1155-56

CHAPTER TWO

Shamsuddin Iltutmish: Sovereign or Usurper?

Iltutmish was not the usurper for the simple reason that there was nothing to be usurped. [1]

R. P. Tripathi

The circumstances under which Shamsuddin Iltutmish (r.1210 – 1236) assumed royal authority and his status as the rightful claimant to the throne of Delhi has been a subject of debate among historians. While a set of historians consider him as the finest Sultan of early Sultanate period; there are others who accuse him as the stealer of the Empire who seized the throne from its lawful claimant Aram Shah. This chapter deals with the problem of the succession of Iltutmish in the light of political conditions prevailing at the time of the death of Qutbuddin Aibak (r. 1206 – 1210), the position of Aram Shah vis a vis Iltutmish, the concept of monarchy in Islamic Jurisprudence, the presence of two rival groups of nobles at the time of the death of Aibek as well as the status of the two Capitals of the early Turkish Empire in India - Lahore and Delhi before and after the accession of Iltutmish. The chapter also attempts to explore the question of legitimacy of Iltutmish in the light of the statements of the contemporary and near- contemporary chroniclers as well as modern historians. It is also imperative to examine the concept of monarchy in Islam and ascertain whether there was any law or precedent in Islamic history which testifies that just by being the son or daughter of the earlier monarch, the

person concerned automatically acquired the right of sovereignty over all the dominions that were subservient to the deceased ruler? Though Qutubuddin Aibak had conquered many a places during his governorship, it is pertinent to ascertain the permanency of these conquests and victories and also to see the status of Lahore stands in relation to other cities and towns of the Sultanate at the time of the death of Aibak. Whether he had left an empire which could be sustained for generations or was it simply a cluster of loosely attached principalities ready to be dispersed at the very first opportunity?

I

An unexpected fall from the back of the horse while playing polo proved fatal for Qutbuddin Aibak and led to his sudden demise at Lahore in 607 H/1210 A.D. The nobles at Lahore which was the seat of government and the capital of the dominions of Qutbuddin Aibak, raised Aram Shah, a person of obscure identity to the throne. Minhaj has mentioned that when Qutubuddin Aibak died, the Amirs and Maliks of Hindustan,[2] in order to restrain tumult and preserve tranquility, placed Aram Shah on the throne.[3] However, the political elites of Delhi refused to endorse this selection. The Commanders of the troops (*Sipahsalar*) Ali-e-Ismail, who was (also) the Chief Justice (*Amir-i-Dad*)[4] of Delhi[5] in concert with the other nobles and high officials wrote letters to Shamsuddin Iltutmish and entreated him to come to Delhi and assume sovereignty. Having arrived at the city, Iltutmish ascended the throne at Delhi in 607 AH/1210 A.D. On becoming aware of the developments at Delhi, Aram Shah along with his retinue marched on Delhi where he was joined by some Turkish and Mu'izzi amirs. They camped in the immediate neighborhood of the town and took to sedition and rebellion. Hasan Nizami provides

further information about the recalcitrant elements of Delhi. He writes that the son of Jandar Tatar[6] was the ring leader of the band of the disgruntled Delhi nobles who resorted to open hostility and pursued the path of oppression and rebellion.[7] Shamsuddin Iltutmish, along with the Delhi troops and his own followers, met them in front of the plain of Jud (garden) near Delhi.[8] Iltutmish's retinue included a number of distinguished warriors and commanders of the time such as Izzuddin Bakhtiyar, Nasiruddin Mardan Shah, Hazabruddin Sur and Iftikharuddin Muhammad Umar who demonstrated their loyalty to Iltutmish and fought valiantly with the enemy.[9] Aram Shah was defeated and most of the rebel leaders were put to the sword. The accomplices of the son of Jandar Tatar, Atsanqar Katta and Tajuddin Farrukh Shah were slain in the battlefield.[10] According to Ferishta, Farrukh Shah was the chief of the malcontents.[11] The son of Jandar Tatar threw himself into the river Jamuna (Jun).[12] In the melee, Aram Shah was killed.[13] His reign did not last more than a few months.

The identity of Aram Shah is obscure. Among the contemporary historians Hasan Nizami does not refer to him at all. Minhaj has addressed him as the son of Sultan Qutbuddin Aibak only once and that too, in the sub-heading of his note on Aram Shah.[14] The information furnished by Minhaj is vague and the possibility of a scribal error while copying the manuscript cannot be ruled out. On many occasion he has stated that three daughter were Aibak's only offspring.[15] Isami confounded the matter further by giving contradictory information on the matter. At one place he has mentioned, 'Aibek fell from horseback and is martyred in Lahore and Aram Shah bin Mubarak seizes the dominion.'[16] At another place, the same chronicler writes that Aram Shah, his [Aibak's] true son, became the king of Lahore. [17] If Aram Shah was the son of Aibak, why did Isami state that Aram Shah was the son of Mubarak? Ferishta calls Aram Shah as the son of Qutbuddin Aibak.[18] Yahya Ahmad Sarhindi also referred to Aram Shah as the son of

Qutbuddin.[19] The Moroccan traveler Ibn Babuta is silent on this issue. The author of *Tabaqat- i-Akbari*, Nizamuddin Ahmed, also alludes to Aram Shah as the son of Sultan Qutbuddin and writes that except him [Aram Shah] he had no other son.[20] Abul Fazl also mentions that Aram Shah was the son of Qutbuddin Aibak.[21] While there is a difference of opinion among medieval historians regarding the parentage of Aram Shah, none of them accuse Iltutmish of grabbing or snatching the throne from the legal heir. In fact, no Medieval Indian chronicler has pronounced Iltutmish as 'usurper' of the throne.

Now the major question is how has Iltutmish been found guilty of the charge of usurpation of the throne? When all the contemporary and near contemporary writers have acclaimed Iltutmish for his intrepidity, grit, fortitude and sense of justice and no none has accused him as an appropriator of the kingdom, how has the term 'usurper' came in use while describing Iltutmish and his reign? A thorough examination of the literature extant on Iltutmish has revealed that it was H. G. Raverty, the English translator of Minhaj Juzjani's *Tabaqat-i Nasiri*, who levelled the charge of usurpation against the Sultan in the first place. He has suggested, while recounting the rebellion of the Delhi nobles shortly after Iltutmish's accession to the throne, that the usurpation of kingship on the part of Iltutmish constrained the Turkish and Mui'zzi amirs of Delhi to join the band wagon of Aram Shah against the Sultan.[22] The term coined for Iltutmish by Raverty was subsequently picked up by Thomas W. Arnold. In his work *The Caliphate* (1924), he writes that one of the governors of Indian provinces, Iltutmish, set aside the son of his predecessor and brought the greater part of Hindustan under him. Iltutmish, further writes Arnold, apparently felt the need of some legal sanction for his usurpation and therefore asked for the investiture from the Caliph of Baghdad.[23] Many modern historians like I. H. Siddqui, Peter Jackson and Sunil Kumar agree with Raverty and Arnold. Peter Jackson goes a

step ahead and declares both Aibak and Iltutmish as usurpers.[24] However, he himself is not sure of the identity of Aram Shah. On the contrary, historians like A. B. M. Habibullah, R. P. Tripathi, and Aziz Ahmed do not endorse this viewpoint.

II

The vital question is not whether or not Aram Shah was the legal heir of Aibak? (It hardly matters even if he was) but how we define the term ‘legal’ in the framework of succession to the throne in medieval India? What were the true criteria of being legal: capability, kinship, election or nomination? In fact, monarchy is an alien concept in Islam. Therefore in purely legal terms the question of legitimacy in the context of succession to the throne is in itself an invalid proposition in Islam. The charge of usurpation against a Muslim monarch much less against Iltutmish therefore hardly deserves serious consideration. However, situation began to change with the expansion of Islam and Islamic empire to distant lands. The jurist perplexed at the emergence of dynastic rule in Muslim countries coupled with the conduct and life style of the Muslim rulers in blatant violation of the injunctions of Islam were constrained to forge or find religious support or legal sanction to the institution of monarchy. The Quranic injunction “Obey Allah, obey the Prophet, and those in authority among you” was very liberally interpreted in order to justify the established practice of royal authority. It was declared that the monarch was endowed with supreme authority and his subjects were bound to obey him. However, the law of succession remained vague and left undecided. We know that Abu Bakr’s (d.634) election as the *Khalifa* or successor of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) had brought forth the following two principles that were bound to influence any future problem related to succession. Firstly, the

leaders of the Muslim community present in Medina at that time did not pay any heed to the question of relationship to the Prophet while electing Abu Bakr thus proving that kinship or relationship was not vital for succession and secondly free election by the assembled members of the community and its subsequent confirmation by the populace at large.[25] The Muslim lawyers gave a lot of credence to these criteria. While laying down the principles for succession to a monarch, this tradition was given utmost importance. They instituted that an aspirant of monarchy should be a free man and if a slave, he should be manumitted from slavery by his master at the time of accession to the throne, that the monarch's name should be included in the sermon (*khutbah*) delivered by the prayer leader (*Imam*) on Fridays and other special prayers in the principal mosques in his domain, that the Sultan should struck coins in his name with an appropriate inscription on it, that an oath of allegiance (*ba'it*) was to be sworn by the nobles and the learned and influential theologians and later by the people in favour of the Sultan and that the sovereign should acquire the investiture from the Caliph of Baghdad which would confirm that the king was the lieutenant (*na'ib*) of the Caliph of Baghdad acting on his behalf in the distant parts of the world. Theoretically, these were the essential qualification for a person to become a sultan, apart from the fact that he should be healthy, both physically and mentally. Some writers also added that he should be an adult male.[26] In actual practice however ability to rule overshadowed everything else. If a person has the strength to overpower his rivals and ability to enforce obedience to his commands, he could well be a king. However, no Muslim jurist has asserted that the successor of a monarch ought to be related to his predecessor. In fact, kinship has not been given any importance for succession in Muslim history since the very beginning. There is nothing like inherited right in Islam.[27] There are very few instances where an Umayyad or Abbasid Caliph had been succeeded by his own son. In fact, merely six out of the

first twenty-four Caliphs of the Abbasid dynasty who ruled for a period of more than two centuries (754-974) were succeeded by their sons.[28]

With the fall of the Caliphate and the rise of the sovereign states, many new traditions came into being. These traditions were however never constant and kept on changing with each passing dynasty, and sometimes, with each new king. The model of the Sultanate polity at Ghazna served as example for the Sultans of the dynasties that ruled in India. Tradition in the matter of succession was not constant either in the Ghaznavid or the Ghorid Empire. After the death of Subuktigin (997), the founder of the Ghaznavid Dynasty, his younger son Isma'il managed to seize the throne of Ghazna. Prince Mahmud, the elder brother of Isma'il, challenged his position not on the basis of seniority but on the ground of his fitness to discharge well the responsibilities of the state.[29] Therefore, fitness to rule was regarded as the chief criterion to hold the power during the reign of Mahmud. Later on, during the period of Mahmud's successors descent became the chief consideration and fitness took the backseat. But we should not be misled by this development. It was solely due to the aura and prestige enjoyed by Mahmud that he was successful in establishing the right of his house to rule. Being the supreme head of a large empire commanding the loyalty and gratitude of the Muslim people, Mahmud had all the liberty to do so. Needless to say that it was the persona of a strong and powerful monarch that led to such a development and not any established norm. Soon, the right of an offspring/progeny of the patron Sultan to rule, which Mahmud had built up and Ghazna had respected for over a century, broke down under the Ghorids. First, while deciding the issue of the succession to the throne of Firuz Koh (the chief seat of government under the Ghorids) after the death of Ghiyasuddin Muhammad, Mu'izuddin Muhammad Ghori (d.1206) gave his verdict in favour of the son-in-law of the deceased Sultan[30] disregarding the claim of his son, Ghiyasuddin Mahmud. The right of

the descendents to rule was completely done away after the assassination of Mu'izuddin Muhammad bin Sam. When the nobles of Ghazna asked Ghiyasuddin Mahmud, his nephew, to come there and occupy the throne, Mahmud refused by saying that he was contented with Firuz Koh. TajuddinYalduz (d.1217), the then governor of Kirman and slave officer of Sultan Mu'izuddin, was keen to rule over Ghazni. Mahmud not only sent a robe of honour to Yalduz and presented him the letter of manumission but also assigned the throne of Ghazni to him.[31] Dr R. P. Tripathi has rightly observed that 'This was by no means an act of willing generosity…….the rivalry of the house of Bamiyan, the growing pressure of the Khwarizm State on the frontier demanded rather a policy of conciliation than hostility of a popular and capable man like Yalduz'.[32] This incident is of great importance. It demonstrates that the immediate tradition preceding the foundation of the Delhi Sultanate, which was established at Ghazni allowed a slave-officer to succeed his master provided the person concerned had been manumitted from slavery and had the power to enforce obedience to his rule.

In view of the essential or rather desirable qualifications laid down by the Muslim jurists for a person aspiring to become ruler of a Muslim state and the immediate convention preceding the birth of the Sultanate, the accession of Iltutmish does not seem to be an act of usurpation. He had all the qualification to be a legal Sultan. Minhaj has mentioned that during the Khokar expedition in 1204, Mu'izuddin Ghori was impressed by the bravery and fighting spirit of Iltutmish and had directed Qutbuddin Aibak to draw up the deed of his freedom.[33] Hasan Nizami also confirms the fact that Iltutmish displayed exemplary valour during the campaign against Khokars.[34] Therefore, Iltutmish was manumitted from slavery much before than his installation as the monarch of Delhi. Some historians have expressed their reservation against the theory of manumission of Iltutmish and have dismissed it as a later fabrication on the part of Minhaj in

order to please the progeny of Iltutmish.[35] This argument is not very convincing because Minhaj concluded his work in 1260 and by that time, Iltutmish had been dead for twenty-four years and the descendants of Iltutmish were nothing but a puppet in the hands of Balban. At that moment harping about the issue of manumission would not have served any purpose for Minhaj because Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud (d.1266) was too weak to either be pleased by this information or to reward him. The de-facto ruler Balban himself suffered from this technical flaw. In 1260, it would have done more harm than benefit to Minhaj. Moreover, Ibn-i-Battuta in his travelogue *Rehla* has written clearly that when the deputation of Ulama headed by Qazi Wajihuddin Kashani inquired about Iltutmish's manumission from slavery during his coronation ceremony, Iltutmish at once presented his deed of manumission and sought their approval.[36] It is true that Ibn-i-Battuta would not have got first hand information about this incident but at least this was what he must have heard from his informants or this was the story in circulation. It is highly unlikely that the traveller has recorded this fact after reading *Tabaqat-i Nasiri*. At the same time, Ibn-i-Battuta has completely ignored the reign of Aram Shah and probably would not have heard about it from the people. This episode certainly evinces the relative importance people attached to a person's manumission from slavery before becoming the Sultan. Even after so many years this episode was fresh in the memory of the people. However, a person's relation with the previous Sultan was not given such importance. Ibn-i-Battuta's failure to give even a passing reference to Aram Shah points to the possibility that Aram Shah's episode has been forgotten by the people. It also indicates that the story of Iltutmish's manumission from slavery was in circulation, which though not mentioned by Minhaj, was heard and recorded by the Moroccan traveller. It certainly supplements the information provided by Minhaj and goes a long way in establishing that Iltutmish was emancipated from slavery prior to his accession to the throne.

We also know that both Minhaj and Hasan Nizami have specified in their works that *Khutbah* was read in the name of Iltutmish after his accession to the throne. Hasan Nizami writes, 'The pulpits of Islam all over the world and in the vast expanse of the earth acquired charm and glory by mentioning his (Sultan Shamsuddin) royal titles and his illustrious name in his sermons'.[37] Minhaj has also written that in the year 622 H/ 1225 A.D. Sultan Shamsuddin subjugated Lakhnauti and its ruler Ghiyasuddin Iwaz Khalji read the *Khutbah* and struck coins in the name of the Sultan.[38]

There are clear evidences which prove that Iltutmish had struck coins in his name. Two gold coins and a number of silver tankas of Iltutmish have been discovered so far. Nelson Wright has provided an exhaustive list of the coins minted during the reign of Iltutmish. A few coins issued by Aibak in his name, mostly rayed circle type and minted in Kuraman, have also come to light.[39] But no coins of Aram Shah have been discovered up till now. Edward Thomas did assign a copper coin, bearing rude traces of the figure of a horseman, to Aram Shah and argues that the inscription carries the epithet 'Abul Muzaffar Aram Shah Sultan'.[40] However, the coins attributed to Aram Shah by Thomas have been ascribed by Wright to Sultan Bahram Shah (r.1240-1242). We also know that the coin assigned by Longworth Dames to Aram Shah is actually a coin of Iltutmish.[41] Therefore, there are strong evidences suggesting that Iltutmish had minted coins in his name. The same cannot be said with equal confidence about Aibak and Aram Shah.

As far as *b*a'yt (oath of allegiance) is concerned, it is well known that the nobles of Delhi had called Iltutmish from Badaun and offered him the throne. Isami also writes that the chiefs (of Delhi) performed the *paibos* (kissing the feet) by way of allegiance to him (the Sultan).[42]

Iltutmish was the first monarch of the Delhi Sultanate to receive the investiture from the Caliph of Baghdad Al Mustansir Billah in the year 1229.[43] Many Ghaznavid and the Ghorid Sultans had also received confirmation for their sovereignty from the Caliph. Even a powerful and illustrious ruler like Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni (r.999 – 1030) and indeed Muslim monarchs world over had sought investiture from the Abbasid Caliph by way of fulfilling an established norm although its actual importance was far from crucial for buttressing their right to sovereignty. Even Sultans Muhammad Tughluq (r. 1325 – 1351) and Firuz Tughluq (r. 1351 – 1388) whose legitimacy to rule was never in doubt and was never questioned had sought the investiture from the Caliph of Baghdad. In view of these facts, Arnold's argument that Iltutmish had applied for the Investiture in order to swathe his act of usurpation seems untenable. There is no evidence that Aibak and Aram Shah had ever sought and received Caliphal investiture.

Iltutmish thus fulfilled all the qualifications enunciated by the jurists as necessary concomitant for royal authority. On the contrary Aibak whose domains Iltutmish is said to have grabbed did not possess most of the requisite qualifications and could not be styled a de-jure monarch. Moreover, the precedent set in Ghazni did not sustain the principle that only the son of the former ruler can govern the empire. As mentioned above, Mu'izuddin Muhammad Ghori himself had decided in favour of the son-in-law of the deceased king at Firuz Koh. Therefore not only theory but even practice did not prevent the slave officer of the former ruler to wield sovereign authority in the territories of his master. Iltutmish satisfied all the requirements of a de-jure ruler; both law and the immediate tradition were in his favour and he was in every sense a legal monarch of Delhi. His marriage to the daughter of Aibak[44] was not meant to provide himself the semblance of legality. It was simply an act of enhancing the prestige of the crown through matrimonial alliance. The bride was the daughter of the former Sultan and through this

relationship, Iltutmish endeavored to attain as much honor and prestige as any such alliance could commandeer. It is not surprising that when Firuz Tughluq decided to include in the *khutbah* the names of the former Sultans of Delhi, the name of Sultan Shamsuddin Iltutmish figured immediately after Muizuddin Muhammad bin Sam. Neither the name of Aibak nor Aram Shah was included in the list.[45] This goes to prove that not only in the eyes of modern historian but also for the later Sultan of Delhi, the history of Muslim sovereignty (at Delhi) began properly with Iltutmish. It also demonstrates that for Firuz Tughluq, Aibak was not the sovereign of Delhi. His dominion and capital city was Lahore which Aram Shah had acquired probably as his patrimony. Delhi emerged as capital of the nascent Muslim state in India after the accession of Iltutmish who was unquestionably its first king.

III

Let us now focus on the political condition of India at the time of Aibak's death. What was the extant of territories controlled by Aibak and whether Iltutmish had seized a full-fledged empire created by Aibak or was the Sultanate Iltutmish's own creation? At the time of the death of Muhammad Ghori his Indian possession comprised of Multan, Uchch, Nahrwalah, Purshor, Sialkot, Lahore, Tabarhindah, Tarain, Ajmer, Hansi, Sarsuti, Kuhram, Meerut, Kol, Delhi, Thankir, Badaun, Gwalior, Bherah, Banaras, Kannauj, Kalinjar, Awadh, Malwah, A-dwand Bihar and Lakhnauti.[46] Aibek was not the sole master of these territories: Uchch and virtually Multan was under the control of Nasiruddin Qabacha, a slave-officer of Mu'izuddin Ghori; Bihar and Lakhnauti were under the Khalji chief, Malik Ikhtiyaruddin Baktiyar Khalji. The hold of Aibak over the remaining territories was also not secure. On the other hand Tajuddin Yalduz,

another senior slave officer of Mu'izuddin, and the ruler of Ghazni continued to stake his claims over his master's Indian territories. He had even attacked Lahore. Though Qutbuddin defeated Yaldoz and even captured his seat of government (Ghazni), he was not liked by the nobles of Ghazni who wrote letters secretly to the latter and entreated him to return.[47] This clearly shows that Aibak was not regarded as the rightful heir to Mu'izuddin's Indian dominions, at least in Ghazni. The position of Aibak against Yalduz had always been precarious. In fact, the threat from Yalduz had constrained Aibak to move to Lahore where he resided there permanently till his death in 1210. In Bihar and Bengal, Bakhtiyar Khalji had from the beginning transacted business independently. If at all he considered anybody his master and overlord, it was Mu'izuddin Muhammad Ghori (though Bakhtiyar was not his slave).[48] He never acknowledged Aibak as his overlord. Even after the death of Bakhtiyar Khalji, Bengal had remained virtually independent of the control of Lahore. Surrounded by political adversaries from all sides, Aibak lacked power as well as resources to interfere in the affairs of a distant place like Bengal. Another slave-officer of Mu'izuddin, Bahauddin Tughril was acting as an autonomous ruler in the territory of Thangir (Bayana). In Bayana, he had also founded the city of Sultankot and had the ambitions of occupying Gwalior. But when the ruler of Gwalior surrendered to Aibak, disregarding the advances made by Tughril, enmity arose between the two (Aibak and Tughril) and hostilities would have taken a serious turn, had Tughril not died unexpectedly.[49] Aibak was therefore not the sole recipient of Mu'izuddin's territories in India. There were other slave officers of equal rank holding important provinces in different part of Hindustan ho posed continuous threat to Aibak's authority after the death of Mu'izuddin..Besides these officers about whom we have detailed information, there were some lesser known but equally important officers active in the subcontinent. A noble named Husain Kharmil held the fortress of Sialkot.[50]

Another distinguished officer was Ali Karmakh who was assigned Lahore by Mu'izuddin after its capture from Khusrau Malik. He was also given the additional charge of the governor of Multan.[51] Both Lahore and Multan were indispensable for the expansion of Turkish empire in India its assignment to the same person speaks volume about the ability of that man and Mu'izuddin's faith in him. Another notable commander of the period was Malik Ziyauddin Nisawi Tulaki, the Qazi of Tulak, who was given the charge of the fortress of Tabarhinda. Mu'izuddin held him in high esteem and had assigned him a huge retinue consisting of the men of Tulak and horses from Hindustan and Ghazni.[52] It is clear from the foregoing account that Mu'izuddin had not one but many officers of equal repute to look after his Indian possession. Most of them were independent of each other and were responsible directly to the Sultan. In fact, detailed account of all the leading officers of Mu'izuddin Ghori who were active in India is not extant simply because the medieval Indian chroniclers tended to focus upon the activities of the Delhi Sultan and those who were in close proximity with the Sultan. In the process many officers who were not in the good books of the Sultan and were either dead or had faded away from the Indian scene by the time the chronicles were written were accorded only a passing reference. It is evident that Aibak was neither superior to these officers nor had the authority to control them. In no case, he was the sovereign of the entire Turkish dominions in India. Therefore, Ferishta's argument that Mu'izuddin left Qutbuddin as the viceroy of all the conquered provinces of India[53] seems untenable. Aibak had not been able to defeat any of his rivals decisively and his position against his adversaries was always tentative and insecure. Throughout his reign, his policy towards Yalduz had been timid, indecisive against Qabacha and practically indifferent towards Bengal. In no respect, can he be called sovereign of entire Hindustan. At the most, he was the ruler of some loosely linked provinces which got fragmented and detached from one another

when he passed away. Aibak thus lacked the power, pelf and prestige enjoyed by Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna. Unlike Mahmud he was in no position to perpetuate kingship in his own family or to create legitimacy for his dynasty. Iltutmish cannot therefore be held guilty of denying the throne to its rightful claimant and legal heir as there was none.

The demise of Aibak signaled almost total breakdown of law and order in India. Immediately after his death, Nasiruddin Qabacha captured Uchch, Multan, Siwastan (Sind) and Diwal, expanded his territories as far as Tabarhinda, Kuhram and Sarsuti and also subsequently invaded Lahore several times.[54] In Bengal, Ali Mardan assumed sovereign status and read the *Khutbah* in his own name and took the title of Alauddin.[55] At Jalore, the tributary Raja Udai Sen extended the territory of Jalore by including in it Nadol, Bhinmal, Baharmer, Ratanpur, Sanchor, and other neighbouring towns.[56] He even refused to pay annual tribute.[57] The fort of Gwalior was recovered by its previous ruler. Ranthambhor, given as an appanage to Prithviraja's son, ceased to acknowledge vassalage.[58] Further fragmentation of Mu'izziddun's domains took place when Benaras and Awadh also joined Bayana, Sindh, Lahore, and Lakhnauti in raising the standard of revolt against the Turkish authorities at Lahore and Delhi.[59] Needless to say that practically all that Muizuddin and Aibak had attained in India had dwindled after the latter's death in 1210. Nothing was therefore left for Iltutmish to usurp.

IV

The validity of the charge of usurpation against Iltutmish can be better understood if we assess the relative importance of the two cities: Lahore and Delhi for the newly established Turkish empire in India. It will be worthwhile to see that whether Delhi and Lahore, the seat of

government in Aibak's regime, enjoyed the same status or did Delhi acquired a superior status during Iltutmish's reign? We know that Muizuddin had captured Lahore after several attempts in 1186. The strategic location of Lahore, considered in some circles as the gate way to India, also made it rather indispensable for the conquest of India. The Gomal Pass [60] did provide access to foreign invaders to cities like Multan and Uchch but the inhospitable terrain beyond these regions made it almost impossible for the invading army to approach the main land. But the route via Lahore did not pose any such problem. Once Lahore was captured foray into the Gangetic plain and Ganga- Jamuna Doab was only a matter of time. Besides, Lahore had been the administrative headquarters of the Ghaznavid Punjab and the seat of government during the period of later Ghaznavids. Khusrau Shah (d. 1164) had taken refuge at Lahore after being ousted from Ghazni by the Ghuzz troops. The city also had a rich cultural heritage. As early as eleventh century, it had emerged as a popular dwelling place for Sufi immigrants. Sheikh Abul Hasan Ali Hujwiri (d.1072), better known as Data Ganj Baksh, and the author of *Kashf al Mahjub*, had, for instance, settled in Lahore in 1035.[61] Masud Sa'd Salman, the great Persian poet of the early twelfth century, and according to some scholars the pioneer of Urdu poetry in Hindustan, also lived in Lahore. This goes to prove that in the eleventh and early twelfth centuries, Lahore was not only a political centre but the focal point of cultural activities as well. For Fakhr- i Muddabir, Lahore was the centre of Islam in India (*markaz i Islam i Hind*).[62] After its conquest, Mu'izuddin had given Lahore the status of the winter capital of the Empire.[63]Hasan Nizami had nothing but praise for the city. On the occasion of Aibak's accession to the throne, the chronicler had observed that 'Lahore was made the capital of the empire. The city had been the seat of government of previous rulers. It was populated by men of true faith. It was the Qibla of virtuous men, the K'aba of nobility and liberal-minded gentry, the centre of men of piety and

abstinence. It had produced many men of learning and jurists. It was the refuge of ascetics and devotees. It was the abode of great Sufi saints'.[64]

In comparison to Lahore, Delhi was a small and insignificant town at the turn of the thirteenth century. Dhillika or modern Delhi was founded by Tomar Rajputs in 736.[65] The Tomars held sway in the Haryana region and were vassals of the Pratiharas. Even in the eleventh century, Delhi was not known for its strategic location or economic prosperity for Mahmud of Ghazna who had attacked Mathura, Thanesar, Kannauj and Somnath had left Delhi untouched. The Tomars were overthrown by the Chauhans in the twelfth century.[66] At the time of the invasion of Muizuddin, Delhi was under the control of the Chauhan prince Govind Rai (Khanday Rai), the brother of Rai Pithora of Ajmer.[67] He had participated in both the battles of Tarain against Mu'izuddin. Delhi was finally captured by Qutbuddin Aibak in 1193. Aibak at that time was governor of of Kuhram.[68] Hasan Nizami on this occasion has written that he (Aibak) added to his kingdom this renowned and well-known (Delhi) fort of the principle city of Hindustan.[69] As Mu'izuddin was interested in venturing further into the Indo-Gangetic plain, Delhi was likely to provide a suitable base for future expeditions in the north-western part of modern Uttar Pradesh. The city also had plenty of water resources. Hasan Nizami has in fact praised Jamuna, on the bank of which the town was, for the abundance of water and unfathomable depths of the river.[70] However, the evidences at our disposal indicate that Qutbuddin never gave any importance to Delhi and never thought in terms of making it as the capital of his Indian territories. More over till 1206, Aibak was only one of the commanders of Mu'izuddin looking after some of his Indian provinces. In fact, he used to submit periodical reports to the Sultan. Hasan Nizami writes that after expedition against Hari Raja, brother of Khandi Rae, when Aibak returned to Delhi, he issued an order to draw up dispatches of victory to be sent to the court of

Ghazna.[71] In the letter, he gave detailed account of the forts that were captured and battles that were won during that particular period so that the Sultan would get a clear idea of the dangers and difficulties faced by the army during these military expeditions. Hasan Nizami himself opines, 'the ultimate aim of the king [Qutbuddin Aibak] was to demonstrate genuine loyalty to the sovereign [Mu'izuddin Muhammad Ghori] whose court is the court of refuge to the ruler of the world and a place where felicity is dispersed and hopes are fulfilled.'[72] It clearly demonstrates that Delhi was not the capital but merely a conquered province of Mu'izuddin and served as a suitable military base for Turkish expeditions in the Indo-Gangetic plain whose command had been entrusted to Qutbuddin Aibak who was obliged to provide every detail of his movement in Delhi and the nearby areas to his master residing at Ghazni. Soon, Aibak was also called to Ghazni to be present in person who he faithfully did.[73] Whether it was the Banaras campaign or the much later Khokar expedition, whenever Mu'izuddin arrived in India and called Qutbuddin, the latter invariably made his services available to his master along with his retinue. R. P. Tripathi has rightly observed that 'the possession of Delhi in those days did not mean much for it was neither the capital of India nor the most important Muslim town.'[74] It therefore amply clear that throughout the reign of Mu'izuddin, Delhi never attained the status of the capital city. It was analogous to many other provinces conquered by the Sultan and, in fact, much less in stature than Lahore. According to Peter Jackson, 'Hitherto Delhi had been merely one of the Muslims' forward bases, and Lahore had remained the capital of Mu'izuddin's Indian province just as it had been of the Ghaznavid territories in India.'[75]

Shortly after the demise of Mu'izuddin in 1206, Aibak ascended the throne in Lahore.[76] Around the same time the coronation of Tajuddin Yalduz took place at Ghazni. Yalduz claimed the Indian possessions of Mu'izuddin on the strength of his accession to the throne of Ghazni

which was the seat of government during the reign of the former Sultan. Hostility arose between the two for the possession of Lahore which ultimately led to an open battle. Aibak must have realized that if Yalduz would enter the Gangetic plain, it would not be possible for him to defend himself. In view of his vulnerability in face of Yalduz's ambitions, Aibak did not venture out of Lahore till his death in 1210. Moreover, since Lahore had already been an established centre of culture and trade under the Ghaznavids and had served as the second capital of Mu'izuddin, it was given preference as capital in comparison to Delhi which, according to Isami, was still a pargana of the country.[77] In all these years Delhi had remained in virtual oblivion. On the contrary, all medieval historians, Hasan Nizami, Isami and Yahya Sarhindi have referred to Lahore as the seat of the government at that time. Minhaj has likewise clearly alluded to Lahore as the capital of Aibak. Writing about the slave officers of Mu'izuddin who attained sovereignty after his death, Minhaj observes that 'Sultan Tajuddin Yalduz at Ghazni; Sultan Nasiruddin Qabacha in Multan and Uchch; Sultan Qutbuddin Aibak at Lahore; Sultan Ghiyasuddin Iwaz, the Khalj, ruled over the territory of Lakhnauti.'[78] Fakr -i-Mudabbir has mentioned Lahore as the permanent capital of Aibak.[79] Isami has also written that both (Yalduz and Aibak) endeavored to bring Lahore and Ghazni under their control in order to put an end to their mutual hostility.[80] Lahore's status as the first city of the dominion of Aibak therefore stands established.

Though Hasan Nizami and Awfi are silent about Aram Shah, Minhaj, as mentioned above (section I), has alluded to his accession at Lahore. Isami has also mentioned that Aram Shah became the king at Lahore.[81] Ferishta is of the opinion as well that Aram Shah ascended the throne at Delhi.[82] Delhi's eminence as the premier city of India in the early seventeenth century, when Ferishta started writing his history, probably induced him to think that Delhi was the capital at that time also and hence he would have us believe that Aram Shah's coronation took

place at Delhi. According to Isami when Yalduz heard that Aram Shah had passed away and Lahore was master less, he sent an army and seized it.[83] So much emphasis on the significance of Lahore and its status as the capital of the dominion of Aibak and Aram Shah is laid in order to highlight the importance of Lahore in comparison to Delhi which was only a small principality at that time. True, many contemporary and near contemporary writers have used the epithet 'capital', 'Hazrat -i-Delhi', and 'seat of government' for Delhi but it should be noted that these chroniclers had written their histories either during the reign of Iltutmish or after his death. By that time Delhi had risen to prominence and had attained the honour of being the undisputed capital of the Sultanate. We know that the medieval historians tended to describe a person, city or institution according to their status at the time of the writing of their book little realizing that the situation might not have been so when the events they were narrating actually took place. For instance, on many occasion, Hasan Nizami has addressed Qutbuddin Aibak as Sultan while he was still a slave-officer of Mu'izuddin in India. Similarly, he also referred to Delhi as a great city seat of government from the very beginning irrespective of the fact that the city had acquired an exalted position only a few years before he started writing his book. The only historian of the Sultanate period who had completed his work before the accession of Iltutmish was Fakr-i-Mudabbir for he brought his work *Shajra i Ansab* to a close in 1206. It is pertinent to note that for Fakr-i-Mudabbir the centre of Islam in India was Lahore and not Delhi. The question is if the capital of the Empire was Lahore, how can the assumption of authority in a mere 'pargana' be called an act of usurpation? Like many provinces (see section III), Delhi also declared its independence at the first opportunity. It was simply an act of establishing its own identity by a subordinate political entity, free of any superior power. Lahore was the principal city of the Turkish Empire in India at that time and no chronicler has suggested that the nobles of

Delhi marched on Lahore in order to capture or grab it. It was just an act of declaration of independence by a principality after the death of the ruler at the capital and choosing its own master. In fact, many provinces had broken their ties with Lahore after the demise of Aibak. Aram Shah marched on Delhi first of all in order to bring it back to subjugation as Delhi appeared to be the weakest at that time. But the central authority failed to hold its own against a subordinate principality and was defeated. Aram Shah was thus unsuccessful in his very first military campaign and in the process lost all moral authority to rule. It would not be appropriate to call the revolt of Delhi nobility an act of usurpation for Delhi was not the seat of imperial authority at that time. In fact, the imperial authority (Lahore) lost against a subordinate political entity and that entity went on to assume imperial status by sheer talent of its sovereign, Iltutmish. It was not the coup d'état at the capital or the seizure of capital by the troops of Delhi. It was a step calculated to establish Delhi's sovereign status and independent identity. R. P. Tripathi has rightly observed that 'It was only after Iltutmish that kingship was seen as the monopoly of his family. Prior to it, the nobles were looking for freedom from the major seat of government but after Iltutmish they looked upon his progeny as their king.[84] By defeating the army of Lahore, Delhi was able to carve a niche for itself in Indian polity and took maximum advantage of it by rising subsequently to imperial status. The mission of Lahore to consolidate the Turkish rule in India was unwittingly relayed to Delhi and its ruler Iltutmish who carried it out brilliantly. Not by virtue of its conquest by Aibak as the commander of Muizuddin that Delhi became the premier city and capital of the Sultanate but due to the sagacity and administrative acumen of Iltutmish who created a well-defined dominion, subjugated all the adversaries, visualized Delhi as the capital and transformed it into a cultural hub.

V

An important aspect to examine in the series of events that occurred between the death of Aibak and the accession of Iltutmish at Delhi is the individuals who were supporting either the cause of Aram Shah or Iltutmish. Their aspirations, objectives and mutual jealously played a vital role in associating themselves with one of the contestants, or propping one against the other.

Narrating the events leading to the accession of Aram Shah to the throne of Lahore, Minhaj writes 'When Sultan Qutbuddin Aibak died, the Amirs and Maliks of Hindustan at once considered it advisable for the sake of restraining tumult, for the tranquility of the commonalty, and the content of the hearts of the soldiery, to place Aram Shah upon the throne.' However, the swift defeat of Aram Shah at the hands of Iltutmish exposed the shortcomings in the former's capability to rule. He had not participated in any earlier expedition as a commander or even as a soldier. The accession of such a person to the throne was more in the interest of the nobility at Lahore than Lahore itself. They chose a puppet through whom they could easily manipulate and keep the administration in their own hands. There are precedents for such action on the part of the nobility. We know that when Alauddin Jahan Suz attacked Ghor, the nobles, taking advantage of his absence from the seat of the government, had raised his nephew, Malik Nasiruddin Husain, the chief of Madin, to the throne. Being a weak man he functioned as a puppet in the hands of the nobles and squandered the treasures collected by Jahan Suz. He was also killed before Jahan Suz returned to Firuz Kuh.[85] The nobility at Lahore were driven by the same avarice and tried to conduct the business in the similar manner. On the contrary, the Delhi nobility acted in the interest of the nascent Turkish state in India and chose a competent person to lead them. Iltutmish had proved his mettle in the Kalinjar expedition and against the Khokars. He was certainly the right man at the right place and in the right time.

The identity of the supporters of the contestants in question is also disputed. Minhaj's narration of events at Delhi in *Tabaqat- i- Nasiri* has been translated by Raverty in the following words, 'As the Turks and Kutbi Amirs from different parts had gathered together before Delhi, and some of the Turks and Mu'izzi amirs had also united with them, and were intent upon resistance, they left Delhi and came out, and they (all) combined in the immediate neighborhood and broke out into sedition and rebellion.'[86] Professor Irfan Habib has added a new dimension to this episode. He has translated the above mentioned statement in the following words, 'As the Qutbi Turks and amirs gathered from all directions at Delhi, some of the Turks and Amirs gathered to oppose them, and pursued the path of enmity. They left Delhi and assembling in the environs, began a rebellion and insurrection'[87] This version completely reverse the information gathered from Raverty's translation which implies that both Qutbi and Mu'izzi amirs had opposed Iltutmish. But from Professor Habib's translation it appears that the Qutbis supported Iltutmish while the Mu'izzis sided with Aram Shah. He further opines that that the fellow Qutbi slave officers backed up Iltutmish because Aibak's Turkish slaves were as determined to destroy the slaves of Aibak's master, as the latter had been to drive out the old Ghorian nobility (after the death of Mu'izuddin).[88] Peter Jackson also believes that Aram Shah had the support of some of the Mu'izzi Amirs while Iltutmish had been backed by the fellow Qutbi nobles[89]. However, much before Irfan Habib, Muhammad Aziz Ahmed has suggested that Iltutmish succeeded in winning over most of the Turks and Qutbi Amirs by conferring splendid gifts and high favour upon them, but some of the Turks and Mu'izzi amirs under Sar-i-Jandar (Head of the Royal Bodyguards) Turki join hands against him, left the capital city with a strong force and broke out in rebellion in the vicinity.[90] Sunil Kumar, however, disagrees with this viewpoint. According to

him, the Qutbi slaves recognized Aram Shah as their new master.[91] This debate remains inconclusive but most modern historians support the theory of Muhammad Aziz Ahmad.

The question is why did the Qutbi amirs support a man (Iltutmish) who was their peer and raised their arms against the son of their master? This is not in consonance with the nature of the nobles in those days. Similarly, what prompted the Mu'izzi amirs to uphold the cause of Aram Shah? Mu'izzi amirs were the slaves of Mu'izuddin and therefore equivalent in rank with Aibak. They had chosen Aram Shah to succeed Aibak solely owing to personal considerations and motives. The struggle that had begun between the parties, one interested in sharing the benefits of the empire and the other struggling for survival, soon led to open war, each trying to outscore the other. The Mu'izzi's upheld Aram Shah while the Qutbi's swarmed around Iltutmish. Aram was a stooge in the hands of Mu'izzi amirs. The Qutbi (slave officers of Qutbuddin Aibek) owed no obedience and allegiance to Aram Shah. Though Iltutmish was their peer, he had proved his worth on many earlier occasions. Just like the Mu'izzi officers had rallied around their peer Tajuddin Yalduz at Ghazni and accepted him as their superior in the absence of a rightful heir of Mu'izuddin, the Qutbi amirs rallied around their fellow officer Iltutmish and vested their power in him by accepting him as their sovereign. Unlike other Qutbi-officer, Iltutmish had also been manumitted from slavery by Aibak on the advice of Mu'izuddin himself and was a free Qutbi officer. It automatically enhanced his prestige and influence over the rest of his comrades in arms. The Qutbis support of their superior peer instead of the alleged son of their master Aram Shah is also indicative of the fact that they refuted the latter's claim to be the heir of Qutbuddin Aibak. Aram Shah seemed more of the candidate of Mu'izzi nobles whom the Qutbis declined to accept. The nobles on both the sides were definitely not contesting

the issue of the rightful heir to Aibak's dominion. For some, it was a chance to augment their fortune, for others a struggle for survival.

VI

It can, therefore, be concluded that Iltutmish was not usurper in any sense of the term. In Islamic jurisprudence, there was not concept of monarchy and consequently no law of succession. Later, when monarchy was legalized by the jurists on the basis of a verse in the Quran, certain prerequisites were laid down by them for a person to become a Sultan. No where it was written that only a son could succeed his father. Moreover, Aibak's position was always tentative against his peers and major adversaries. He failed to subdue them and could not establish a definite superior-subordinate relationship with most of them. The credit of providing the real sovereign status to the Muslim polity in India goes to Iltutmish who had convincingly defeated all his rivals and accorded the Sultanate a well defined structure and endowed the office of the Sultan with substantial power and dignity. Iltutmish also succeeded in establishing himself as the undisputed head and master of his contemporaries. In terms of territory also, Iltutmish hardly received anything. While many principalities were virtually independent during the reign of Aibak itself, the rest had declared their autonomy on hearing the news of his demise. Delhi was also one such principality which decided to set up its own identity and sovereign status after the death of Aibak. When Iltutmish ascended the throne at Delhi, it was a minor principality and not the capital of the Turkish Empire in India. He not only consolidated the empire but expanded it, subjugated all his adversaries one by one and created a sound and lasting administrative apparatus for it as well. By his exploits he raised the status of Delhi to such a level that it came to

be addressed as Hazrat-i- Delhi. His achievements speak for themselves and enabled him to create an impeccable legitimacy for himself and his family to rule. His claim to be the de-jure as well as de-facto monarch of Delhi was therefore undisputed and unquestionable. Abu Hamid al Ghazali (d.1111) has suggested that any government was lawful so long as its ruler made formal acknowledgment of the Caliph's theoretical authority in his domain. A Sultan could do this, Ghazali maintained, by including the reigning Caliph's name in public prayers (*Khutba*) and by minting coins (*Sikka*) in his name.[92] In Islam, therefore, legitimacy to rule was not claimed either on the basis of blood relationship with the earlier Sultan or on the principle of primogeniture. According to Richard Eaton 'A Sultan's authority rested, not on any sort of divine appointment or either inheritance, but on his ability to maintain State security and public order.'[93] Iltutmish fulfilled all the qualifications to rule and also possessed the power and pelf to enforce obedience to his commands. He was, therefore, no usurper in any sense of the term. He was on the contrary the architect of the Sultanate and the builder of its capital, Delhi, the majestic. When he ascended the throne of Delhi, he found chaos in the Turkish Empire in India but when he died quarter of a century later, he left order, peace and tranquility. This was no mean achievement at all.

NOTES:

[1] R.P. Tripathi, *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration* (Allahabad: Central Book Depot, 1992; first published, 1936) p. 25

[2] It is noteworthy that by "Hindustan" Minhaj does not mean the regions east of Delhi. At one place he has mentioned that Hindustan became sub-divided into four portions: the territory of Sind under Nasiruddin Qabacha,

Delhi under Iltutmish, the territory of Lakhnauti appropriated by Khalji maliks and Sultans, and the state of Lahore seized in turns by Tajuddin Yalduz, Qabacha and Iltutmish. See Minhaj-i-Siraj Juzjani, *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, translated into English by Major H. G. Raverty (Calcutta: The Asiatic Society, 1995; first published, 1881), vol. I, p. 530. All references from *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri* in this paper have been taken from Raverty's translation. At another place, while describing the reign of Khusrau Malik, Minhaj has written that Khusrau Malik had retired to Lahore, of Hindustan. See *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, p. 112. It is therefore clear that Minhaj considered areas from Lahore and Sind up to Bengal as Hindustan and not just Delhi and the regions east of it. Therefore in the aforementioned statement, the nobility of Hindustan signifies the nobility at Lahore which was the seat of government and not the nobles of Delhi which was just a principality.

[3] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* pp. 528-529; Ferishta wrongly mentioned the place as Delhi. See Muhammad Qasim Hindu Shah Ferishta, *Tarikh-i Ferishta History of the Rise of Muhammadan Power in India*, translated into English by John Briggs as *History of the Rise of Muhammadan Power in India* (Delhi: Low Price Publications, 2006; first published, 1829) vol. I, p.115

[4] Many historians get confused and considered both Sipahsalar and Amir-i-Dad as two different authorities, which is erroneous. It was one person holding both these positions. In the early Sultanate period when the administrative machinery was not yet developed and there was no clear cut division of labour, a single person could be entrusted with the charge of two or more department. The Amir-i-Dad was a high military cum civil officer next to the Sipahsalar in rank and position in the provincial organization. During the absence of the Sipahsalar, he acted as the chief of the provincial army and government. For reference, see the note in I.H. Siddiqui, *Indo Persian Historiography up to the Thirteenth Century* (Delhi: Primus Books, 2010), p.53

[5] Minhaj was calling Delhi as the capital city because Minhaj has completed the work in 1260 when Delhi had already assumed the status of the capital of the Sultanate and was addressed as Hazrat-i-Delhi. However there are clear evidences that at the time of the death of Aibak, Lahore was the capital of the dominion of the late Sultan. See Hasan Nizami, *Taj ul Ma'asir*, translated into English by Bhagwat Saroop (Delhi: Saud Ahmad Dehlavi, 1998) p.279; Isami, *Futuh us Salatin*, translated into English by Agha Mahdi Husain (London: Asia Publishing House, 1977), vol. II, p. 210b; Yahya bin Ahmad Sarhindi, *Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi*, translated into English by Henry Beveridge (Delhi: Low Price Publications, 2010), p. 15

[6] The identity of the son of Jandar Tatar is obscure .The second word of his name suggests that he was a Turk. The first term of his name "Jandar" implies Royal body guard. Therefore, he was a Turk who worked as the Royal bodyguard (head or not is not clear). Moreover in *Taj ul Ma'asir*, it is written that it was the son of Jandar Tatar who revolted against the Sultan and not Jandar Tatar himself. The revolt was thus probably not led by a state functionary as important as Jandar but his son who must have his own reasons for such action. Since he came out with some of the Turks and Mu'izzi amirs, it is probable that Jandar, a Turk, belonged to the stock of the slaves of Mu'izuddin and was one of his less-recognized 'ghulam' who served as royal bodyguard of either Mu'izuddin or Qutbuddin Aibak, or both.

[7] *Taj ul Ma'asir*, p. 292

[8] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* p. 606; *Taj ul Ma'asir*, p. 296

[9] *Taj ul Ma'asir*, p.295

[10] Ibid, p. 297

[11] Ferishta, op.cit., p.116

[12] *Taj ul Ma'asir*, p.298

[13] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* p. 530

[14] Ibid, p. 528

[15] See the note in *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* p. 529

[16] *Futuh us Salatin*, p.213

[17] Ibid, p.215

[18] Ferishta, p.115

[19] *Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi*, p.16

[20] Khwajah Nizamuddin Ahmed, *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, translated into English by Brajendra Nath De (Delhi: Low Price Publications, 1992, first published, 1911), vol. I. p.60

[21] Abul Fazl Allami, *Ain-i-Akbari*, translated into English by Colonel H.S. Jarrett (Delhi: Low Price Publications, 2011, first published, 1927), vol. II. p.307

[22] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* p. 606

[23] Thomas W. Arnold, *The Caliphate* (London: Rouledge and Kegan Paul Limited, 1965; first published, 1924), p. 86

[24] Peter Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate: A Political and Military History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.31

[25] Ishtiyaq Husain Qureshi, *The Administration of the Sultanate of Delhi* (New Delhi: Oriental Books Reprint Corporation,1971), p. 53

[26] Ibid, p.56

[27] S. L. Rathor, 'A Plea against the Charge of Usurpation by Iltutmish', *Islamic Culture*, vol. XXXII, no. I, January 1958, p. 265

[28] Arnold, *The Caliphate*, p. 23

[29] *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration*, p. 08

[30] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri* ,vol. I, p. 393

[31] Ibid, p. 502

[32] *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration*, p. 17

[33] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 605. Mu'izuddin had earlier desired to purchase Iltutmish when he was brought to the slave market of Ghazni. See *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 601.

[34] *Taj ul Ma'asir*, pp.262-263, also see Ferishta, p.112

[35] See I.H. Siddiqui, *Indo Persian Historiography up to the Thirteenth Century*, p. 26, fn, 09

[36] Ibn-i- Battuta, *The Rehla of Ibn-i-Battuta*, translated into English by Agha Mahdi Husain (Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1976; first edition, 1953), p. 33

[37] *Taj ul Ma'asir*, p. 288

[38] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 610

[39] H. Nelson Wright, *The Coinage and Metrology of the Sultans of Delhi* (New Delhi: Oriental Books Reprint Corporation, first Indian edition,1974), p.69

[40] Edward Thomas, *The Chronicles of the Pathan Kings of Delhi* (Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Oriental Publishers, first Indian edition, 1967), p. 40

[41] Nelson Wright, p. 69

[42] *Futuh us Salatin*, p.218

[43] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 616

[44] Ibid, p. 530

[45] Shams-i-Siraj Afif, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, translated into English by R.C. Jauhri (New Delhi: Sundeep Prakashan, 2001), p. 79

[46] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 491

[47] Ibid, p. 506; Ferishta, op. cit. p.112

[48] During the period of adversity (after returning from the disastrous Tibet campaign) Bakhtiyar Khalji would be constantly saying: 'Can any calamity have befallen the Sultan i-Ghazi that my good fortune hath deserted me!' it was the same period when Mu'izuddin had attained martyrdom. See *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 572

[49] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, pp. 545-547; Ferishta, op. cit. p.114-115

[50] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 453

[51] Ibid, p. 456

[52] Ibid, p. 458

[53] Ferishta, p. 110

[54] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 532; *Tabaqat- i- Akbari,* p. 48

[55] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 578

[56] Muhammad Habib and K. A. Nizami, *A Comprehensive History of India, vol. V, Part II: The Delhi Sultanate (AD 1206-1526),* (New Delhi: People's Publishing House, 1993; first published, 1970), p. 828

[57] Ferishta, p. 117

[58] A. B. M. Habibullah, *The Foundation of Muslim Rule in India* (Allahabad: Central Publishing House, 1976; first published, 1945), p. 46

[59] Sunil Kumar, *The Emergence of the Delhi Sultanate* (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2007), p. 131

[60] *The Foundation of Muslim Rule in India*, p. 46

[61] N. R. Farooqi, *Medieval India: Essays on Sufism, Diplomacy and History* (Allahabad: Laburnum Press, 2006), pp. 46-47

[62] See Peter Jackson, p. 26

[63] I. H. Siddiqui, *Indo Persian Historiography up to the Thirteenth Century*, p. 21

[64] *Taj ul Ma'asir*, p. 279

[65] Romila Thapar, *The Penguin History of Early India: From the Origins to A. D. 1300* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2003; first published, 2002), p. 420

[66] Ibid, p. 420. The Bijhli rock inscription (district Udaipur, Rajasthan) issued by Chahaman (Chauhan) Someshvara in V. S. 1226 (A.D. 1169-1170) referred to Dhillika (identified as modern Delhi) as the exploits of Vigraharaj, the first major Chahaman emperor, see K. M. Shrimali, 'The Origins: From Indraprastha to Dhilli' in the Souvenir *Delhi: Through the Ages,* released in *Indian History Congress*, sixty-eighth session, 2007, p. 12

[67] See *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 459, fn 09

[68] Ibid, p. 515; *Taj ul Ma'asir*, p. 72

[69] *Taj ul Ma'asir*, p. 104

[70] Ibid, p. 144

[71] Ibid, p. 112

[72] Ibid, p. 112

[73] Ibid, p. 114

[74] *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration*, pp. 20-21

[75] Peter Jackson, p. 26

[76] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, pp. 525-526

[77] *Futuh us Salatin*, p.217

[78] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 489

[79] Fakr-i-Mudabbir, *Tarikh-i-Fakr-i-Mudabbir*, cited in I. H. Siddiqui, *Indo Persian Historiography up to the Thirteenth Century*, p. 21

[80] *Futuh us Salatin*, p.211

[81] Ibid, p. 215

[82] Ferishta, vol. I, p. 115

[83] *Futuh us Salatin*, p.216

[84] *Some Aspects of Muslm Administration*, p. 29

[85] I. H. Siddiqui, *Authority and Kingship under the Sultans of Delhi* (thirteenth-fourteenth centuries), (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers and Distributors, 2006), pp. 26-27

[86] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 606

[87] Irfan Habib, 'Formation of the Sultanate Ruling Class of the Thirteenth Century' in Irfan Habib (ed.) *Medieval India 1: Researches in the History of India 1200-1750* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000; first published, 1992), p. 09

[88] There were so much animosity and jealousy in the heart of the Turk maliks of Mu'izzuddin for their Ghorian counterparts that when the bier of Mu'izzudin was dispatched from Damyak towards Ghazni, the Turk nobles deprived the Ghorian Maliks and amirs by force of the bier of the late Sultan together with precious treasures and took possession of them, see *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 492

[89] Peter Jackson, p. 29

[90] Muhammad Aziz Ahmad, *Political History and Institutions of the Early Turkish Empire of Delhi (1206-1290 A.D.)*(New Delhi: Oriental Books Reprint Corporation, first Indian edition, 1972), pp. 162-163

[91] Sunil Kumar, *The Emergence of the Delhi Sultanate,* p. 133

[92] Richard M. Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier* (1204-1760), (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2010; first Indian edition, 1994), p. 29

[93] Ibid, p. 29

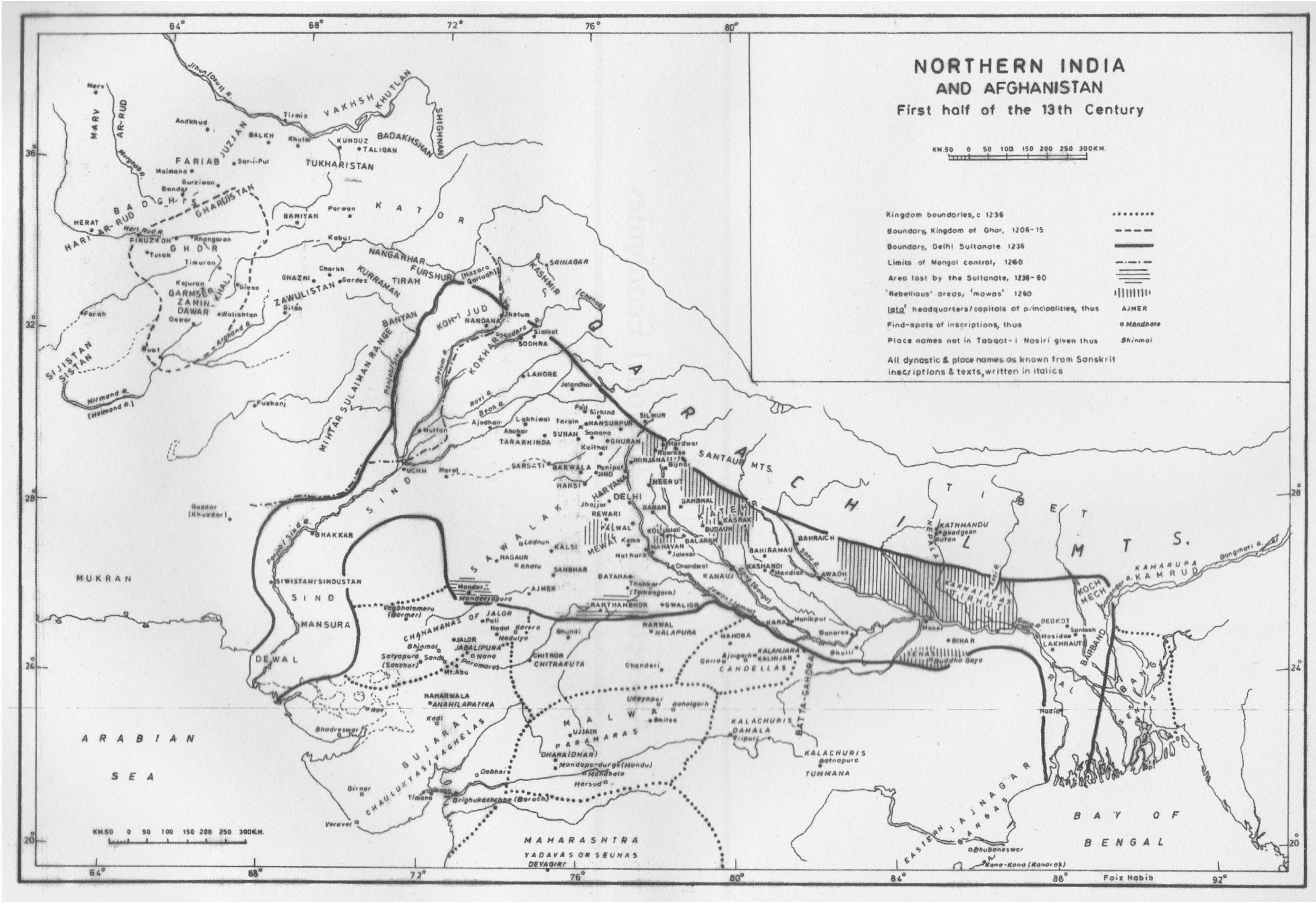
CHAPTER THREE

The Making of a Sultan: Iltutmish's Relations with his adversaries, Internal Problems, and the Conquest of Hindustan

Bring whatever you like, either peace or war; in either case you will find no procrastination on my part.[1]

Iltutmish to Yalduz

Though Iltutmish had ascended the throne at Delhi and had brought the town and its surrounding areas under control, he still had to establish his authority as the de-facto ruler of Muhammad Ghori's Indian territories. The task was not easy. His problems were multifarious. On the one hand, he had to contend with the senior slave-officers of Muhammad Ghori whose claim to a larger share and say in their master's patrimony had been left undecided by Aibak. On the other hand, new rivals in the form of the ruler of Bengal were creeping up their heads harbouring the desire of independence and having a much larger potential of challenging Iltutmish's authority. The demise of Aibak and the consequent political uncertainty in India had also given the Indian Princes an opportunity to fish in troubled waters and create fresh problems for the new Sultan. Moreover, activities of his rivals in the North West Frontier and the Indus region were presenting new challenges to the stability of the infant Sultanate of Delhi (dealt



Map 3: Boundary of the Delhi Sultanate in 1236

This Map has been taken from Irfan Habib, *History of Science, Philosophy and Culture in Indian Civilization volume VIII, Part 1: Economic History of Medieval India, 1200-1500* (New Delhi: LongmanPearson, 2011)

separately in the next chapter). In such a scenario, the throne of Delhi was not going to prove a bed of roses for Iltutmish and the Sultan was called upon to muster all of his grit, energy, political acumen and survival instincts to rise to the occasion and deal with these problems. In this chapter, I have attempted to deal with the internal problems of Iltutmish. The chapter will therefore focus on the saga of his struggle and success against his rivals, the failure of his adversaries to make common cause against the Sultan and the Sultanate and the Sultan's success in carving out an extensive empire in the teeth of all the challenges and opposition.

I

The most important rival of Iltutmish and pretender to the throne of Delhi was undoubtedly Tajuddin Yalduz (d.1217). He was one of the ablest and senior most slave-officer of Mu'izuddin Muhammad Ghori and his master held him in great honour and respect. The other slave officers of the Sultan also acknowledged Yalduz's qualities of head and heart and held him in high esteem. Gradually he rose to higher positions and the Sultan conferred upon him the government of the districts of Sankuran and Karman.[2] The 'lower' route from Ghazni to Lahore lay passed through the province of Karman and therefore, the Sultan would make a halt in his province every year during his march against India. Yalduz used to organize splendid feast for the entire retinue of the Sultan including Amirs and Maliks, and even bestowed lavish presents on them.[3] This annual interaction with the nobility of Ghazni coupled with his abilities left such a favourable impression on the minds of the governing class that when Aibak occupied Ghazni for a brief period of forty days after the demise of the Muizuddin, they refused to acknowledge him their sovereign and wrote secretly to Yalduz to come back to Ghazni and take charge. On his last expedition to India when Mu'izuddin halted at Karman, he presented Yalduz with his own princely robe. Minhaj writes that the Sultan conferred upon him a black banner and it was the

desire of his august mind that Tajuddin Yalduz should succeed to the throne of Ghazni after him.[4] Yalduz had therefore been accepted as the ruler of Ghazni after Mu'izuddin's death. Though Aibak had refused to accept the suzerainty of Yalduz and had declared his own independent status, he failed to come to a decisive settlement with Yalduz. Throughout Aibak's lifetime, Yalduz kept on pestering his claims on the Indian territories.

When Iltutmish ascended the throne, he immediately encountered a rebellion led by the son of Sar-i Jandar Turki. After that storm got over, Tajuddin Yalduz, who at that time seemed to have also occupied Lahore,[5] sent Iltutmish a canopy of State and a Durbash,[6] which was indicative of the subordinate status of Iltutmish. Isami writes that Yalduz also wrote a letter to Iltutmish in the following words: 'O wise and enlightened man! You should move towards Hindustan and capture it to the liking of your friends. Our frontier stretches to the region of Lahore where we have numerous troops. You must not bring your army to this side; make a capital on that side. You can march your army up to the rough sea and may forcibly seize the whole Hindu country.'[7] This epistle amply demonstrates that Yalduz considered Iltutmish as his vassal and wanted him to make Hindustan as the centre of his activity leaving Panjab under his own custody. Needless to say that by his words and deeds Yalduz was certainly projecting himself as Iltutmish's overlord. It was tantamount to reaffirming his claim on the Indian territories of Mu'izuddin and clearly an attempt at the reestablishment of the supremacy of Ghazni over the India. It can therefore be concluded that the theory that Aibak's greatest service was to cut India off from the supremacy of Ghazna[8] is not entirely correct. Ghazni never gave up its claim on Indian provinces. It was only Iltutmish who laid Ghazni's claim on India to rest for good. Yalduz had also deliberately kept Lahore with him so that gate to India should remain open to him which he could tap whenever he liked. He also advised Iltutmish to establish his capital in the Indian side making it clear that Lahore and not Delhi was

the capital of Muizuddin's Indian territories earlier on. Iltutmish was passing through a very difficult phase at that time. He had just faced a rebellion, a section of nobility was against him, many others in principalities like Badaun, Awadh, Benaras were in no mood to submit to his authority. Therefore, Iltutmish thought it wise to silently accept the self-proclaimed sovereignty of Yalduz. He behaved in a discreet manner, accepted the gifts sent by Yalduz and decided to bid his time for an appropriate response to Yalduz's aggression. Silence on the part of Iltutmish lured Yalduz into belief that the former has acquiesced to his suzerainty and that Delhi was his appanage. The Sultan's plight at this juncture is also reflected in his earliest inscription, discovered from Palwal, (October 1211),[9] where he styles himself with the subordinate title of 'Al Malik al- Mu'azzam. The Sultan knew very well that the exigency of the moment demanded submission. His priority now was to consolidate his power in Delhi and the nearby provinces and not to draw sword with the far stronger ruler of Ghazni.

In 1215, Ghazni knelt down before the ever-expanding power of Khwarazm Shah and Yalduz had to evacuate from there. He rushed to Lahore which, at that time, has been grabbed by Qabacha. Yalduz overthrew Qabacha and occupied Lahore. Convinced that Iltutmish still considered him as his overlord, he sent messengers in quick succession to the Court of Delhi. According to Hasan Nizami, these letters contained a variety of requests the acceptance of which would have brought ignominy and disgrace to the mighty empire.[10] Yalduz's intention now was to seize the dominion of Iltutmish. Iltutmish was quick to realize that it was the opportune moment to settle scores with Yalduz. His position had been considerably weakened by the onslaught of the Khwarzm Shah who had reduced him to the status of a fugitive and had even ousted him from his seat of government. To overpower him in this situation was comparatively easier than to control him in his full strength. Having prepared for war, both the armies came

face to face. Isami writes that at this hour, Yalduz sent a messenger to Iltutmish with the following message: 'O renowned commander, you know, that I am fitter than you to rule the kingdom of Hindustan in which you have taken up your residence today, for I am in the position of the son to the late king…'[11] It was a direct challenge to Iltutmish and the sovereign status which he had attained. Isami mentions the reply given by Iltutmish to Yalduz in the following words: 'Tell the king…you know that today the dominion of the world is enjoyed by him who possesses greater strength. The principle of hereditary succession is now extinct, long ago. Destiny abolished this custom…You cannot take the world through inheritance and boasting; you can take it only by wielding the sword in battle….I did not in the first place march the army to fight with you; it is you who marched into this country with the object of fighting me…when you suffered a defeat at the hands of Khwarazmis, you resolved to invade my country….Bring whatever you like, either peace or war, in either case you will find no procrastination on my part. If you want peace, come alone into the field….We shall then embrace each other and no sore will remain in our hearts. We shall then retire- you towards Lahore and I towards Hindustan….If you do not agree to this proposal, you may beat the drum of war and fight…[12].

This letter is of considerable significance to understand Iltutmish's theory of kingship and his attitude towards his adversaries. Firstly, he did not believe in hereditary succession to kingship; 'Survival of the fittest' seems to have been his motto. Secondly, Iltutmish was not ready to share sovereign authority with any other person –neither with the older nobility nor with his peers. Thirdly, he had not tried to liquidate Yalduz till the time his own survival was put into danger. Moreover, Yalduz presence at Lahore was a direct threat to the existence of the Delhi Sultanate. It was also an open invitation to the Khwarazm Shah to enter the subcontinent in order to chase Yalduz. The moment was opportune for the Sultan since the power of Yalduz had been curtailed and there was and perhaps would never be a better time to confront him when his resources were half. It is also clear that Iltutmish wanted to settle the dispute amicably like a gentleman. He offered a negotiated settlement to Yalduz and was ready to discuss peace on a one

to one basis. Yalduz however decided to fight and the battle took place at Tarain.[13] Hasan Nizami gives the date of the battle as 3rd Shawwal 612 AH/ 25 January 1216.

There is a dispute among medieval historians regarding the war strategy employed by Yalduz. Hasan Nizami writes that Yalduz made a surprise attack on Iltutmish's troops. A party of the vanguard of the troops of Malik Tajuddin advanced and suddenly attacked the right wing of the royal force.[14] However, the attackers failed to make an impression on the rival army were routed ultimately. Writing about the same battle, Isami says that Yalduz had the drum of war beaten instantly, ordered the army to make an attack and without looking to the right, or to the left, he used the whole of his army for this assault.[15] Whatever may have been the battle strategy adopted by Yalduz, it is certain that it did not work and he was defeated.[16] He was captured, and dispatched to Badaun where according to Minhaj, he was martyred. Aziz Ahmad on the basis of the same authority suggests that Yalduz was poisoned at Badaun.[17] The tomb of Yalduz is situated on the bank of Sutha (the river is not visible at present. It seems to have either dried up or changed its course) in the city of Badaun.[18] His mausoleum became a place of pilgrimage for the denizens of the town. According to Prof K.A. Nizami, 'this was a double victory for Iltutmish: the removal of the most dangerous rivals to his power and the final break with Ghazni, which ensured an independent status for the kingdom of Delhi.'[19] The sovereignty of Ghazni over Delhi became a thing of the past. Though in terms of territorial gain the victory did not prove to be very fruitful, it still deserves to be seen as one of the most consequential battles of the early Sultanate Period.

II

Like Yalduz, another potential rival of Iltutmish was Nasiruddin Qabacha. He was also a prominent slave-officer of Mu'izuddin Muhammad Ghori and had served him in various capacities. When the feudatory of Uchch, Nasiruddin Aetamur died in the battle of Andkhud,[20] the government of Uchch was entrusted to Nasiruddin Qabacha. He was also the son-in-law of Qutbuddin Aibak as two of Aibak's daughters were married to him (the second was married to him after the death of the first one). By the eldest daughter, Qabacha had a son called Alauddin Bahram Shah. During the lifetime of Aibak, Qabacha functioned more or less like an independent feudatory of Mu'izuddin in India. After the death of Aibak, along with Uchch, he got hold of the cities of Multan, Sindustan (Siwistan) and Diwal. To the east, he captured the entire territory up to the limits of Tabarhindah, Kuhram and Sarsuti. Many fortresses, cities, and towns of the territory of Sind were conquered by him He even took Lahore on several occasions. In course of these triumphs, he is said to have assumed two canopies of state.[21]

The first encounter between Iltutmish and Qabacha took place, according to Minhaj, in 614 AH/1217 AD. Minhaj does not provide much detail of this battle and simply says that Qabacha was overthrown by Iltutmish. Hasan Nizami writes that the event took place in 613 AH/1216 AD. While recounting the events, he relates that early on 14th Shawwal 613 AH/ 26 November, 1216 AD**,** the army of Iltutmish was ready for battle on the outskirt of Lahore.[22] Soon they reached the fortress of Chamba. When the royal troop crossed the river Beas, the Governor of the fortress, Amir Aqsanqar Kitta[23], who was standing on the bank of the river, lost his nerves and took to flight. Nasiruddin Qabacha followed suit and fled to Uchch. Iltutmish thus occupied Lahore without shedding a drop of blood. That Iltutmish moved against Lahore and not towards Uchch, which was the seat of government of Qabacha, indicates that the motive of Iltutmish was not to destroy the power of Qabacha but to regain Lahore. The question is how and why Lahore

came under the control of Qabacha after Iltutmish's triumph over Yalduz. Hasan Nizami writes that Iltutmish moved against Qabacha because the latter 'has all at once thrown on dust old agreements as if these were draughts of water.'[24] According to the chronicler, Qabacha had overlooked the obligations and did not fulfill old promises. The words like 'agreement', 'obligations' and 'promises' indicates that Iltutmish and Qabacha had perhaps signed a pact regarding the occupation of Lahore. In all probability, Qabacha had agreed to fulfill certain obligations and had made certain promises in order to occupy Lahore. On these grounds, Lahore had been handed over to him. It was definitely a calculated move on the part of Iltutmish. Lahore was a distant province and managing its affairs at this juncture when situation in Delhi was still far from satisfactory was extremely difficult. Continuous pressure from the North West and various unruly tribes residing nearby had aggravated the problem further. In such circumstances, entrusting the governance of the province to someone else through an agreement and in exchange of a fixed tribute was the best possible course of action for Iltutmish. Almost a century later Sultan Alauddin Khalji (r.1296 – 1316) followed a similar policy in the Deccan. However, owing to the soaring ambition of Qabacha, the system did not last long. Qabacha defied the agreement and Iltutmish was compelled to move against him. The manner in which Qabacha fled from the field without engaging the enemy indicates that by 1217 Iltutmish had been able to muster a huge and powerful army of his own.[25] Iltutmish entrusted the government of Lahore to his ablest son Prince Nasiruddin Mahmud a few months later (in the early months of 614 AH). The strategic and sensitive location of Lahore demanded the appointment of a high ranking official and with Lahore directly under Iltutmish, he could trust no one except his own son, whom Hasan Nizami has praised in high terms.[26]

Ferishta writes that in 615 A.H./1217 A.D., the second expedition of Iltutmish against Qabacha took place (like Minhaj, Ferishta also believes that the first encounter between the two occurred in 614 A.H.). He informs that Nasiruddin Qabacha defeated the chief of the Khalji tribe inhabiting the areas near Ghazni.[27] They fled to Iltutmish for protection who marched against Qabacha for their sake. Qabacha was defeated a second time and the territories lost by the Khalji maliks were restored to them. However, Ferishta is the only authority to have mentioned this incident. No other historian had referred to it though Minhaj has mentioned a battle between Qabacha and Khaljis under Malik Khan. According to Minhaj, the battle which ended in the defeat of the Khaljis took place in the latter part of 623 A.H. / 1226 A.D. after the Khaljis captured Mansurah, a city of Siwistan.[28] Minhaj also writes that there used to be constant conflict between Iltutmish and Qabacha which continued unabated till the battle between Khwarazm Prince Jalaluddin Mangbarni and Temuzin, popularly known as Chengiz Khan.[29] Therefore, a skirmish between Iltutmish and Qabacha, as told by Ferishta, cannot be ruled out completely.

Following the indecisive battle between Jalaluddin Mangbarni and Chengiz Khan on the banks of river Indus (1221), the former crossed the Indus and entered Hindustan. The coming of Jalaluddin Mangbarni and later, of Mongols in pursuit of him, put a temporary halt to the ongoing rivalry between Iltutmish and Qabacha. Due to the exigency of the situation both adversaries preferred to focus on tackling their respective problems. Iltutmish got himself involved in Bengal and Rajputana. The Sultan was also called upon to face disgruntled nobles in different parts of the Sultanate[30] but subdued them successfully. Qabacha had to face much stronger and dangerous adversaries: the ambitious and chivalrous Jalaluddin Mangbarni and the intrepid and mighty Chengiz Khan. Besides, he also had to face the Khalji rebellion and the disturbances created by Khokhars. (For a detailed account of Qabacha's struggle in the North

West, see the next chapter on foreign relations). In the face of so many problems and surrounded by multiple adversaries, the authority of Qabacha diminished considerably both in terms of area under his control and wealth. On the contrary, the position of Iltutmish grew stronger with each successive triumph in Bengal, Rajputana and elsewhere.

Mangbarni's arrival in Sind region[31] was followed by several skirmishes between him and Qabacha. Mangbarni's matrimonial alliance with the Khokar chief's daughter also provided him an edge over Qabacha. The Khokars helped Mangbarni against him. In 621 A.H/1224 AD, in pursuit of Mangbarni, the Mongols under the command of Dorbei Doqshin (for more on him, see the next chapter) came up to the walls of Multan and besieged it for forty two days.[32] Qabacha incessant defeats earlier at the hands of Yalduz and later by Mangbarni and Mongols must have shaken the trust of the inhabitants of Multan and Sind, including the learned and pious men,[33] in the administration of Qabacha. It also depleted his treasury and robbed him off much of his territories, which in turn curtailed his resources further putting extra-pressure on him. On the contrary, Iltutmish succeeded against most of his rivals he encountered. It enhanced his prestige among the inhabitants of these areas who probably began to look towards him as their saviour.

Nevertheless, Qabacha remained a potential rival and powerful adversary of Iltutmish. With the eruption of Mongols in Central Asia and their devastation of Islamic lands, many learned men, nobles, poets etc. were taking refuge in India. Many distinguished men from Khurasan, Ghor and Ghazni took refuge in his court and he came to enjoy the company and service of men of diverse talents and skills.[34] Malik Tajuddin Binal Tigin, son of one of the maternal uncles of the Khwarazm Shah, came to Hindustan along with his cousin Firuz Iltutmish and joined the ranks of Qabacha.[35] He however abandoned Qabacha for Mangbarni later on. In 622-623 AH/1225-1226 AD, the Maliks of Ghur joined him on account of the ravages carried

out by the Mongols in that region.[36] This certainly would have strengthened his position. Around the same time, when the Khaljis captured Mansurah, Nasiruddin Qabacha handed them a crushing defeat and returned to Uchch and Multan. This indicates that in spite of his recent reverses against Mangbarni and Mongols, Qabacha was still powerful enough to defeat the Khaljis. After the departure of Mangbarni from India in 1224, Qabacha moved in the Salt Range against Badruddin Tarpal, the Khokar chief, defeated him and forced him to sue for peace. According to Awfi, Nasiruddin Qabacha's prudent statesmanship earned him the goodwill of the Khokars. Thereafter, fifty thousand fierce swordsmen, who followed their chief, became Qabacha's servants and devout supporters.[37] Moreover, Qabacha had many supporters in Delhi. Awfi in his biographical dictionary *Lubab ul Albab* has for instance given an account of one such adherent of Qabacha: Bahauddin Ali bin Ahmad Jamaji. Jamaji had been entrusted the command of Bahraich by Iltutmish. He declared for Qabacha and in 1220 offered his services to the ruler of Uchch.[38] The success of Qabacha against Khaljis and Khokars that too after bearing the brunt of Mangbarni and Mongol onslaught and the skill of the new entrants in his service affirms that Qabacha could not be overpowered easily. Certainly not, if the struggle was going to take place in his own den.

On the other hand Iltutmish, in the wake of three highly successful campaigns in Bengal and Rajasthan, was preparing to take a crack at Qabacha. The Sultan however moved against Qabacha in a cool and calculated manner. The coming of Mangbarni to India had proved a blessing in disguise for Iltutmish in as much as the events that followed severely weakened the strength of Qabacha. But he waited for the departure of Mangbarni from India and Chengiz Khan from this world. In 625 AH/1228 AD, the Sultan began his campaign against Uchch and Multan. Isami, Nizamuddin Ahmad and Badauni have mistakenly placed this expedition against Qabacha

in 614 A.H/1217 AD immediately after Iltutmish's encounter against Yalduz. But there are sufficient evidences that the final struggle between the two began almost eleven years later. On 1st Rabi ul awwal, 625/ 9 February, 1228 AD, the Sultan reached the walls of the fort of Uchch.[39] Like Hasan Nizami, who has mentioned that Iltutmish's expedition against Yalduz in 1217 AD was the result of the violation of agreements on the part of the latter, Awfi also maintains that Iltutmish marched against Nasiruddin Qabacha because he had violated all agreements signed between them from time to time.[40] Peter Jackson opines that perhaps in order to secure assistance from Delhi against Yalduz and subsequently against the Khwarazmians, Qabacha had either made some gesture in recognition of Iltutmish's sovereignty or had promised to surrender territory to Delhi and that his failure to abide by his obligations served as a casus belli.[41]

The time for Iltutmish's aggression against Qabacha was opportune. Iltutmish has consolidated his position at the centre and had expanded his dominion in the east as far as Bengal. He had the power and resources to move against Qabacha at this time. Moreover, the threat from foreign invaders had also receded. After careful planning, Iltutmish launched a two pronged attack against Qabacha. He dispatched Malik Nasiruddin Aiyitim, the governor of Lahore, against Multan and marched himself against Uchch. Nasiruddin Qabacha pitched his camp before the gates of the town of Ahrawat.[42] Soon his intelligence agents informed him about the troops that had besieged Multan. Panic-stricken, he took to flight towards Bhakkar[43] and asked the Wazir, Ain-ul-Mulk Husain-i-Ashari to transport all the treasures from Uchch to Bhakkar. Iltutmish pushed forward his advance-guard under the command of Amir-i-Hajib Malik Izzuddin Muhammad Salari, and Malik Tajuddin Sanjar-i-Gazlak Khan, the governor of Tabarhindah. Four days later, the Sultan himself along with the rest of the army, the elephants, baggage and followers arrived at Uchch and pitched his camp. The Wazir of the Sultanate,

Nizam ul Mulk Muhammad Junaidi and other nobles were directed to march towards the fort of Bhakkar in pursuit of the ruler of Uchch.[44] Hostilities continued for three months at Uchch and on Tuesday, 28th of Jamadi ul-Awwal, 625 AH/ 5 May, 1228 AD, the fort surrendered on terms of capitulation.[45] Malik Nasiruddin Aiyitm also succeeded in capturing the fortification of Multan which he took in his possession by capitulation.[46] When the news of the fall of Uchch reached Nasiruddin Qabacha, he sent his son Alauddin Bahram Shah along with treasures to Iltutmish to negotiate for peace. While he was still in the camp news of the fall of Bhakkar arrived on 22nd Jamadi-ul Awwal 625/ 29 April, 1228 AD.

It was reported to the Sultan, writes Minhaj, that Qabacha had drowned himself by throwing himself into the river Indus. Awfi informs that when Alauddin Bahram Shah came for negotiation, Iltutmish demanded that Qabacha should come in person. In despair, the latter drowned himself in the river.[47] However, from the account of Isami, it appears that Qabacha did not commit suicide but the boat on which he was travelling had capsized.[48] With his death the last among the important officers of Mu'izzuddin Muhammad Ghori who had been given the command of the Indian territories, passed into history. It sealed the fate of the last major advisory of Iltutmish. His authority now spread from Bengal in the east to Sind in the west and to Lahore and Multan in the north-west. Shortly after this, Malik Sinanuddin Chatisar[49] of the Sumra dynasty, who was ruling over Diwal (Lower Sind) arrived in the camp of Iltutmish and accepted his suzerainty.

III

Prior to the conquest of Multan and Sind, Iltutmish had succeeded in establishing his authority over the territory of Bengal. Bengal was initially grabbed by Malik Ikhtiyaruddin Muhammad bin Bakhtiyar Khalji in the year 1204. [50] Bakhtiyar was a freelance adventurer who had started his career as a subordinate officer of Malik Husamuddin Aghul Bak, the governor of Awadh. In 1204, he made a surprise attack on Bengal with a band of approximately 200 Turkish cavalry men and conquered the entire territory without much resistance on the part the Bengali political elites. After his death in 1206,[51] the control of Bengal changed many a hands before being finally seized by Husamuddin Iwaz Khalji who ruled it with the title of Ghiyasuddin.

Immediately after Bakhtiyar's demise, one of his subordinate officers Ali Mardan Khalji had assumed sovereign status in Bengal. He was not destined to enjoy supreme power in Bengal for long and was soon defeated and expelled by one of his comrades Muhammad Sheran. Ali Mardan fled to Qutbuddin Aibak and asked for his help. Aibak commanded Qaimaz Rumi, the governor of Awadh to proceed to Lakhnauti to settle the matter. When Qaimaz arrived at the outskirts of Bengal, he was received by Husamuddin Iwaz Khalji, the feudatory of a place called Kankuri.[52] This was the first incident when Husamuddin emerged as a prominent player in the politics of Bengal.[53] In the battle that ensued, Sheran was defeated and Ali Mardan was reinstated to the government of Bengal as a tributary of Qutbuddin Aibak. On the death of Aibak, Ali Mardan formally ascended the throne with the title of Sultan Alauddin.[54] Ali Mardan's turbulent reign also proved to be short lived; he was murdered after a reign of two years (1212-13). Husamuddin Iwaz Khalji, a man of exemplary disposition, was now placed upon the throne by the Khalji nobility. Husamuddin had the khutbah read and coins stuck in his name at Lakhnauti. He assumed the title of Ghiyasuddin and made Lakhnauti the seat of his government.[55] The principalities around Lakhnauti such as Jajnagar, Bang, Kamrup and Tirhut

were reduced to the position of tributary states and the whole of Gaur (earlier name of Bengal) passed under his control. From several inscriptions discovered from Bengal we come to know that from 1219 onwards, a Sultan named Mu'izuddin Ali Iwaz was ruling over Bengal. The identity of this person is however obscure. He was probably Ghiyasuddin's son who ruled either jointly with his father or had succeeded him.[56] Minhaj has, however, not mentioned this person in his account of Bengal. In 617 AH/ 1220 AD, Husamuddin adopted the title of Al- Azam invoked the name of the Khalifa al Nasir on the coins. In 620 AH/ 1223 AD, he assumed the title Sultan al- Salatin.[57]

Bengal was important for Delhi Sultanate for various reasons. Situated on the mouth of the delta, Bengal was an extremely rich province and a huge source of revenue, which could be utilized in strengthening the Sultanate. From time immemorial, Bengal was also known for its cotton textiles. It was an important item of trade for the long distance traders like the Arabs and the Persians. As early as 851AD, the Arab geographer Ibn Khurdadhbih had referred to the unparalleled beauty and excellence of the Bengali fabrics.[58] Another Arab geographer, Al-Masu'di (d. 956) was however the first to record the presence of Muslims in Bengal.[59] The sea-borne trade of Bengal was the major source of the supply of bullion in the sub-continent. But perhaps the most important reason for maintaining hegemony over Bengal was the horse-trade. It is well known that cavalry was the main strength of the army of Delhi Sultanate. According to Simon Digby, the Delhi Sultans always endeavoured to increase their supply of war animals and deprive their enemy of the same by restricting the access of horses to their territories.[60] Bengal was a major centre of horse trade and Minhaj has provided details of the supply of the tangahan horses (horses with saddles on their back) from Karambattan (probably in Nepal Valley, or some area across the Himalayan Mountains) to Lakhnauti through various passes.[61] He writes that in

the cattle markets of Bengal about one thousand five hundred horses were sold daily. A considerable number of these Kohi (mountain horses) may have found their way to the Coromandel Coast for onward transportation to the littoral states.[62] This was obviously not in the interest of the Sultanate and obliged the Sultan of Delhi to establish their predominance over Bengal. Husamuddin Iwaz Khalji's presence in Bengal and the steady augmentation of his authority was also against the interest of the Sultanate. When he self- proclaimed himself as commander of the Caliph of Baghdad and assumed the title of *Nasir Amir ul Muminin* (helper of the Commander of the Faithful), his growing power, pelf and prestige became a potential source of threat to the position of Iltutmish as the Sultan of Delhi. Invasion of Bengal now became a matter of time. (For more on Husamuddin's self-proclamation, see chapter four section II).

In spite of his heavy involvement in the politics of northern and north-western India Iltutmish had kept himself posted with the affairs of the eastern provinces. On several occasions, he had sent forces from Delhi towards Lakhnauti and in course of these expeditions had acquired parts of Bihar and installed his own officers there.[63] Since the situation in the north-west was still beyond his control and chances of success were not very bright, Iltutmish turned his attention towards Bengal. In 622 AH/1225 AD, he marched towards Lakhnauti. Husamuddin accepted his suzerainty. He also agreed to give thirty eight elephants and eight million tankas as tribute.[64] Khutbah was read and coins were struck in the name of Iltutmish.[65] The Sultan also appointed Malik Alauddin Jani as the governor of Bihar. As soon as the Sultan returned, Hasamuddin showed his true colours, attacked and captured Bihar from Alauddin Jani. Malik Jani went post haste to Awadh and beseeched its governor Prince Nasiruddin Mahmud, the eldest son of Iltutmish, to attack Lakhnauti.[66] The Sultan also decided to put an end to the troubles from Bengal once for all and commanded the Prince to proceed towards Lakhnauti along with Malik

Alauddin Jani and another noble Pulan.[67] Sultan Ghiyasuddin (Husamuddin Iwaz Khalji) unmindful of the developments in Delhi had in the mean while led his forces against Kamrup leaving the capital city Lakhnauti unprotected. The Delhi army reached the capital unmolested and laid siege to it (1227). On hearing the news, Husamuddin came back, fought a pitched battle with Prince Nasiruddin Mahmud on the outskirts of Lakhnauti but was defeated and killed. Many Khalji maliks were taken prisoner and an enormous amount of booty fell into the hands of the victors. Large sum of money was sent from Lakhnauti for the pious men of Delhi and other cities and towns. Iltutmish sent a robe of honour, from among the dress which he had received from the Caliph of Baghdad, and a red canopy of state to the Prince[68]which was bestowed on the latter in Lakhnauti. Richard Eaton has rightly observed that 'by having the investiture ceremony enacted in the capital city of the defeated Sultan of Bengal, Iltutmish vividly dramatized his own prior claims to Caliphal legitimacy.'[69] In a territory, the monarch of which had proclaimed himself to be the right hand of the Caliph, Iltutmish demonstrated successfully that only he deserved to govern the regions of Hindustan as the subordinate of the Caliph. According to Isami, Nasiruddin established his government at Lakhnauti and ruled the area firmly and effectively.[70]

Peace in Bengal however proved to be short lived. After the death of Prince Nasiruddin Mahmud in 626 AH/1229 AD, Balka Khalji rebelled in Lakhnauti. The identity of this man is disputed owing perhaps by the diverse ways his name has been spelled in various extant manuscripts of Tabaqat-i-Nasiri.[71] But the problem can be resolved by carefully analyzing the information provided by Awfi. He writes that Balka Khalji was a noble of no consequence in Bengal prior to its conquest by Prince Nasiruddin Mahmud. Later he was patronized by Iltutmish who allowed him to retain a vast territory in Bengal where he acted like a vassal with the title of

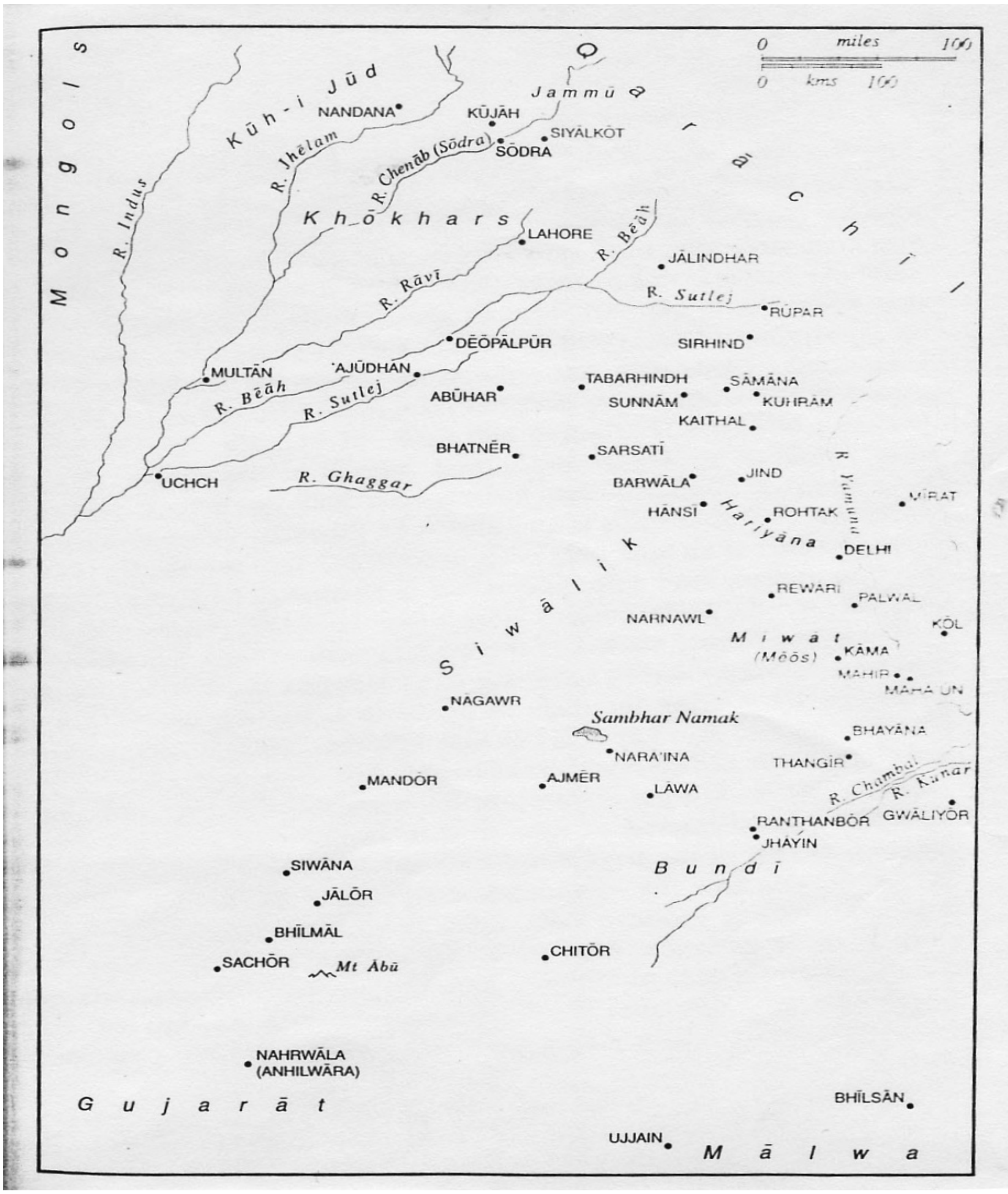
Daulat Shah. He remained loyal till 1229 when suddenly Nasiruddin Mahmud left this world. Balka declared his independence and became so powerful that Iltutmish had to march in person to Lakhnauti in 1230 in order to quell the rebellion.[72] According to Minhaj, the rebel was subdued in 628 AH/ 1230-1231 AD. The Sultan conferred Lakhnauti on Malik Alauddin Jani and returned to Delhi in Rajab, 628 AH/ May 1231 AD.[73]

Richard Eaton opines that the early Turkish rulers of Bengal like Muhammad Bakhtiyar Khalji, Ali Mardan Khalji, and Iltutmish did not try to seek legitimacy within the framework of Bengali Hindu culture or of establishing any sense of continuity with the defeated Sena kingdom. They aimed at communicating a message of brute force.[74] When Iltutmish established his power in Bengal, he minted coins in his name which bears the image of a Turkish cavalryman charging at full gallop and holding a mace in hand.[75] It was a continuation of the image carved on the coins of the earlier Turkish Sultans of Bengal.

Needless to say that the triumph in Bengal further strengthened the position of Iltutmish and the final victory against Balka established his position as the only Muslim Sovereign of Hindustan who was able to extend his sway from Lahore to Lakhnauti.

IV

Apart from struggle against his own co-religionists, Iltutmish also fought numerous battles with the Indian princes. Though comparatively lesser in scale and significance, success in these combats played a critical role in establishing Iltutmish’s supremacy in India and in consolidating his position against his rivals.



Map 4: States of Western, North-western and Central India in the Thirteenth Century

This map has been taken from Peter Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate: A Political and Military History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999)

The first Indian prince to submit to Iltutmish was Udai Singh, the Chauhan ruler of Jalor. According to Hasan Nizami the expedition took place in the early years of the reign of Iltutmish though he has not assigned a date to this event. We are told that Udai Singh had challenged the authority of Delhi by refusing to pay the usual annual payments. Iltutmish marched on Jalor accompanied by Ruknuddin Hamza, Izzuddin Bakhtiyar, Nasiruddin Mardan Shah, Naseeruddin Ali, Badruddin Sanqar Tigin and many other nobles.[76] All of them were expert archers. Overawed by the military prowess of Iltutmish, Udai Singh sued for peace. The Sultan agreed to hand over the fort to the Raja in return of costly gifts and substantial annual tribute.[77] Given the fact that Jalor was situated deep inside Rajasthan, it seems highly unlikely that Iltutmish could have undertaken a campaign of this magnitude so early in his career when his own position at the centre was far from stable. In all probability, the expedition took place shortly after the campaigns against Ranthambhor[78] and Mandor.[79]

Ranthambhor was ruled by Govind Raj, the exiled son of Prithviraj Chauhan. The name of Govind Raj appears in an inscription (1215, Manglana, Jodhpur), which refers to the acknowledgement of his son Vallan Deva's suzerainty by a local chieftain Jaitrasinha; the inscription also alludes to 'Suratrana Lititimishi of Joginpur'.[80] The inscription among other things probably indicates Iltutmish's paramountcy over Ranthambhor. The Sultan's name as 'Sama-Sorala-Deva' also appears on the coins of one Chahar Deva who appears to be ruling at Ranthambhor around the same time.[81] These evidences suggest that during the earlier period of Iltutmish's reign, Ranthambhor had accepted his suzerainty. Subsequently taking advantage of the Sultan's involvement in Sind and Bengal campaigns, Ranthambhor seems to have toyed with the idea of declaring independence which prompted Iltutmish to use arms against it. In 623 AH/1226 AD, immediately after returning from Bengal, Iltutmish sent his troops to

Ranthambhor. The fort of Ranthambhor was famous for its strength and impregnability. Legend had it that over seventy kings had tried to reduce it and failed.[82] The royal army however conquered the fort without much fan-fare.[83] Isami writes that Iltutmish appointed a rawat-i-arz (high military officer) with a squadron of soldiers in charge of the fortress.[84]

The following year (624 AH/1227 AD), the Sultan marched against the fort of Mandor in Siwalik. A lot of booty fell into the hands of the royal army. Amir Ruhani, one of the learned men of the age who came to Delhi after the Mongol onslaught, composed eloquent verses commemorating victory over these territories. Some of the couplets are as follows:

> The angel Gabriel, to the denizens of the sky, did bear
> The news of the triumphs of Shamsuddin, the Sultan great;
> Oh holy angels! that on the highest heavens do dwell;
> For this great news in heaven built domes and arches high;
> The emperor of Islam, from the Mulahida
> Hath rested again forts as lofty as the sky,
> The warrior of the faith on whose arm and sweat
> The soul of the impetuous Haidar showers praise.[85]

Rajputs sources also refer to attack on Nagda (a town 14 miles to the north of Udaipur), the capital of Guhelots, by Iltutmish. At that time it was ruled by Jaitra Singh (1213-61) who tried to check the advance of the Turks towards Rajasthan. Iltutmish defeated him, destroyed Nagda and forced Jaitra Singh to transfer his seat of government to Chittor.[86] An unsuccessful attack is also said to have been made on Gujarat, the Chalukyan territory.[87] In Rajputana, Iltutmish also annexed Lawah, Kasili and Sambhar.[88]

Emboldened by these victories, Iltutmish decided to launch an offensive in Central India. In 629 AH/1232 AD, he advanced on Gwalior which had thrown off the Turkish yoke after the

death of Aibak. Parihara ruler Mangal Dew, son of Mal Dew ruled Gwalior at that time. He offered stiff and spirited resistance and the siege of the fort continued for eleven months. Minhaj was present in the Sultan's camp where, according to his own testimony, he delivered a series of religious discourses to boost the sagging morale of the army.[89] Ultimately, on 26 Safar, 630 A.H/ 12 December, 1232 the fort was captured by storm. In course of the previous night, Mangal Dew fled evacuating the fort. About seven hundred defenders were publicly executed.[90] Malik Tajuddin Reza[91] composed the following verses on the occasion of victory which has been carved on a stone and placed on the main gate of the fort.

> Every fort which the Sultan of Sultans conquered,
> He conquered by the help of God and the aid of the faith.
> The fort of Gwalior, that pregnable fortress,
> He conquered in the year six hundred and thirty.[92]

The victory was celebrated lavishly and many officers of the state were rewarded by increase in their ranks and grant of additional assignments. The Sultan also ordered the playing of quintuple 'naubat',[93] as a mark of augmentation in his own power and status.

Two years after the Gwalior campaign, Iltutmish entrusted Bayana and Sultankot to Malik Nusratuddin Tayasa'i along with Shahnagi of the territory of Gwalior. The fort of Gwalior was also placed at his disposal.[94] The Malik was also deputed to make inroads into Kalinjar and Chanderi and the contingents of Kannauj, Mahir and Maha'un[95] were placed under his charge.

Kalinjar, the stronghold of the Chandellas, had fallen to the arms of Aibak in 1203. However, the victory seems to have been temporary for in 1205 Trailokya Verma, the ruler of Kalinjar, is recorded to have fought with the Turushkas.[96] An inscription found at Ajaigarh dated 1212 mentions that Trailokya Verma, actually possessed the fortress.[97] In 631AH/1233-34,

Tayasa'ia marched against Kalinjar and defeated its ruler after a pitched battle. Towns were plundered and a vast booty fell into the hands of the victors.[98] On his way back, Tayasa'i also deceived and defeated the Rana Chahar of Ajar,[99] who had dared to block his way. This victory however did not bring the desired territorial gains.

In 632 /1234-35, Iltutmish led a campaign against Malwa. He took the fortress and city of Bhilsa and demolished a temple which was said to have been three-hundred years old. Isami writes that the Sultan entrusted the region to one of his chiefs.[100] Subsequently, he marched to Ujjain and destroyed the idol-temple of Mahakal Deva. The effigy of Bikramjit and some other idols were brought to Delhi.[101] However, the destruction of temples by the troops of Iltutmish and his decision to carry away the idols to the capital can be explained in terms of medieval Indian conventions of warfare. In his path-breaking article Richard Eaton has suggested that in ancient and medieval period temples were not only places of worship but also acted as a hub of political activities and a repository of wealth. More often than not therefore temples bore the brunt of invading armies both Hindu and Muslim. The triumphant invader would plunder the chief temples of the region and would take away the idol of the family deity (*kul-devta*) of the vanquished ruler with him. More importantly, the idol of the family deity of the temple's royal patron, represented the shared sovereignty of king and the deity.[102] Eaton has narrated numerous incidents, from sixth century A.D. onwards, of looting of the temples and carrying off the image of family deities by the invaders because the plunder of the image and/or temple marked the destruction of king and his territory. For instance, in 642 A.D., Pallava king Narsimhavarman I looted the image of Ganesha from the Chalukyan capital of Vatapi. In the eight century, Bengali troops destroyed the image of Vishnu Vaikuntha which was the family deity of Lalitaditya, the king of Kashmir, etc.[103] Plunder of temples therefore, seems to have been a normal practice in

medieval and pre-medieval India. It is paradoxical but true that temples were targeted not so much due to religious bigotry but owing to other mundane motives. Mosques usually did not suffer the same fate for they were only a place of worship where people gathered for prayers. They did not share political authority with the ruling prince of the territory where they were located. Richard Eaton has pointed out that the Sultans viewed the desecration of royal temples as means of striking at the legitimacy of a Hindu monarch to rule his kingdom as well as the kingdom.[104] It is in the light of these facts that we have to look at Iltutmish's attack and sacrilege of temples in Vidisha and Ujjain.

Iltutmish's expedition against Malwa was the natural outcome of his policy of aggressive expansion of his empire. Satish Chandra has rightly pointed out that it was not unusual for a kingdom located in the Gangetic valley, to move out in the direction of Gujarat and Malwa after a process of internal consolidation.[105] It was during the Malwa campaign that Iltutmish had resorted to the plunder of temples. There is no reason to believe that Bengal, Multan, Lahore and Sind which Iltutmish had invaded earlier were devoid of temples. However, there is no evidence of attack on temples on the part of the Sultan in these areas. Had the temples been plundered on account of religious intolerance alone, they would not have been spared even in these regions. Moreover Muslim chroniclers would have bragged about it in glowing terms. Their failure to do so can be explained in terms of the ground realities in these regions. These areas were under the sway of Muslim rulers who obviously adhered to the same ideology as the Delhi Sultan. They did not link their sovereignty with a place of worship or a particular monument. The temples in these regions did not serve as centers of politics and storehouses of wealth. Hence, there was no reason why a temple situated in Bengal or for that matter in Sind and Panjab would be attacked.[106] Malwa held a different position. The temples in this expanse represented the political

and in some ways the economic power of its Hindu rulers which made them temple highly vulnerable in the face of external aggression. The Muslim chroniclers looked upon these incidents as the victory of Islam over Hinduism and wrote about them with great élan. In fact, the plunder of temples in Malwa can be seen as the continuation of a tradition and practice that had become a normal course of action in the politics of pre-Sultanate India.

V

From the foregoing account it is evident that by the time his reign came to an end, Iltutmish had managed to do away with all his rivals and pretenders to the throne of Delhi. His victory in Malwa and success in three back to back highly effective campaigns in Bengal, Rajputana and Uchch cannot be termed as a fluke. It is also true that the Sultan would not have gained these victories without the aid of a capable army. Nasawi has written that Iltutmish had raised a formidable army of 1, 30,000 soldiers for this projected campaign against the Khwarazmians.[107] Though Nasawi's statement regarding the strength of the Sultan's army is obviously an exaggeration, there are evidences that the latter did command a strong army. It was also not very difficult for a monarch like Iltutmish to build a strong army given the number of people readily available in the medieval period to join the royal army. We know that even with his meager resources Bakhtiyar Khalji had managed to raise an army which enabled him to launch a full scale invasion of Bihar and later Bengal.[108] In the same vein, when Alauddin Khalji (d.1316) marched from Kara to Delhi after assassinating his uncle Jalaluddin, he was able to muster a large army by freely doling out among his supporters the wealth that he had acquired from the Deogiri campaign.[109] It had the desired effect and people flocked to his camp seeking recruitment in his army. This goes to prove that people were available and willing to join the army provided they get paid handsomely and regularly. This also indicates that ample economic

resources were needed for building a strong army. Even a fugitive like Jalaluddin Mangbarni had managed to raise a considerable army in India with the help of his resources.[110] It can also be said with a degree of certainty that Iltutmish's victories in north-western, eastern and central India brought in their wake huge amount of war-booty and augmented his resources to further strengthen his army. On the contrary, it deprived his opponents of the assets needed for raising a fighting force. It was not without reason that Qabacha had directed his Wazir to shift the treasure preserved in the fort of Uchch to Bhakkar. It was not mere love for wealth. With a depleted treasury, he could not face the Delhi forces with confidence. In short, Iltutmish's military triumphs were the result of his ability to muster a strong army for which the booty that fell into his hands during military campaigns was also responsible in no small measure.

During the reign of Iltutmish, there was a large exodus of people from Central Asia and Iran towards India due to the Mongol onslaught on these territories. Minhaj, Awfi, Isami and a host of other medieval chroniclers have written that extremely learned and talented men came to Hindustan after the calamity that struck Central Asia and Khurasan in the early thirteenth century. Almost all these refugees took shelter in the courts of Iltutmish and Qabacha and enriched their new home by their skill and talents. Many of the new arrivals were well-versed in the art of warfare and proved to be an asset to these rulers in their struggle against their adversaries.[111] For instance, we find Nasiruddin Abu Bakr b. Suri among Iltutmish's maliks (for more about him, see chapter 6). He was among the surviving members of the Ghurid dynasty and his family had once ruled over Madin.[112] We also know that during the last days of Iltutmish, the Wazir of Baghdad, Fakrul Mulk Isami, reached Delhi and joined the Sultan's service.[113] Jamaji who reached Delhi in 620/1223 speaks of the flight of the Muslims of Khurasan, Transoxiana, Ghur, Ghazna, nay all Muslims of the east (bal kaffa-yi musalmanan-i mashriq) to India during

Iltumish's reign.[114] Moreover, with Iltutmish's triumphs on various fronts and Qabacha's frequent reverses in the north-west, Delhi emerged as a much better option for taking up shelter and seeking succour. During the expedition against Uchch, Minhaj switched sides and came over to Iltutmish discarding the loyalty towards Qabacha. Later, he got the combined charge of Qazi, Khatib and Imam of the royal army after the victory at Gwalior.[115] Peter Jackson writes that it was a time for highly unstable allegiances and there were many who shifted their loyalties unabashedly. Nasawi tells us that during Jalaluddin Mangbarni's negotiations with Iltutmish, two officers of Jalaluddin deserted their master and joined the service of the Sultan of Delhi because they were weary of the hardships they were facing under their master.[116] Similarly, two of Qabacha's nobles Nusratuddin Muhammad bin Husain bin Kharmil and Tajuddin Binaltegin left him to join the Khwarizm Shah.[117] Iltutmish took full advantage of this era of political turmoil and shifting loyalties. By patronizing the gifted immigrants, Iltutmish made maximum use of their expertise and talents. In return, he indeed gained a lot.

The skilful use of military equipments and techniques of Central Asia and India by Iltutmish also contributed to his success. During his meteoric rise from a petty slave of Qutbuddin Aibak to the throne of Delhi, Iltutmish had seen the best of both the world in terms of weaponry and military strategy. Fakhr-i-Mudabbir has spoken very highly of the bow and sword among the weapons employed in the battle. Among weapons of close combat, Indian sword was considered best and most lustrous (gauhar-dartar).[118] Bows, from Ghazna and Lahore and two of their proximate geographical areas were also very much in demand.[119] As far as accessories of archery were considered, arrow shafts of reed and bow string of rhinoceros hide were considered most effective.[120] Both reed and rhinoceros hide were available in India in plenty. Iltutmish seems to have synthesized the Ghaznavid and Ghorid military traditions and strategies with the

best of Indian war materials. It is reported that Iltutmish used to wield the Hindustani sword.[121] He also had in his service expert archers who were past masters in their profession. He also made available to them all the accessories required for better shooting. On the contrary, Indian archers seem to have been deficient in the art of archery and did not make use of the archer's thumb-ring. The Sultan also made skilful use of elephants as a part of his battle strategy. In the battle against Yalduz, Iltutmish is reported to have utilized the litter of a war-elephant for the purpose of shooting arrows.[122] It was a good war-strategy for aiming the target from a higher place was bound to increase the effectiveness of the weapon. In an excavation at Lalkot near Delhi, iron arrowheads have been found in the artifacts related to the Sultanate period (Period II, end of twelfth to the end of fourteen century).[123] We know that weapons made of iron were largely used in Central Asia. It continued to be produced in bulk in the Sultanate period as well. Notwithstanding the use of elephants, cavalry and archery formed the backbone of Iltutmish's war strategy. Several officers of Iltutmish seem to have been expert in horsemanship and archery. Minhaj is full of praise of one such officer Kuret Khan's mastery in these trades.[124] Needless to say that the Sultan's success in employing the best of Indian and Turkish military strategy and weaponry certainly gave him an edge over his adversaries which paved way for his military triumphs.

Iltutmish also had the benefit of many capable generals in his service. They served him loyally and did not let him down in the hour of need. His own son Nasiruddin Mahmud was an accomplished soldier and had proved his worth at many a front. Malik Nasiruddin Aiyitim was equally gifted in the art of warfare and had played a significant role in the capture of Lahore. In the same vein Junaidi, Malik Izzudddin Salari and Sanjar-i-Gajzlak Khan had contributed significantly in the conquest of Uchch. Malik Nasiruddin Tayasa'i was also very high in

Iltutmish's estimation. When he was returning from the Kalinjar campaign, he came to know that the Rana of Ajar was preparing to ambush him and his men on their way back to Delhi. He at once divided his troops into three segments so that the entire army should not fall prey to the trap laid by the enemy.[125]This strategy worked well; the Rana was routed and the Turkish army reached its destination safely. This incident indicates the ability and quick-wittedness of the nobles of Iltutmish. They were capable of chalking out brilliant strategies even in the face of emergency. Adroit handling of such capable and powerful generals required a man of equal ability, grit and talent at the helm of affairs. Iltutmish possessed these qualities in ample degree. He not only utilized their services skillfully but also their aspirations in check. It was no mean achievement which facilitated his triumph against his adversaries.

It is also worth mentioning that Iltutmish's fortune also favoured him in time of need. Many of his rivals had been reduced to misery when he took the field against them. Both Yalduz and Jalaluddin Mangbarni, for instance, fought with depleted strength when they came face to face with Iltutmish. Yalduz had been hounded out of Ghazni by Khwarazm Shah. He was more or less a refugee when he fought Iltutmish in Lahore. Likewise, Mongols were at the throat of Jalaluddin Mangbarni when he arrived in India. He was not the heir of the mighty Khwarazmian Empire but a fugitive looking for succour and support from any quarter. In the same vein, Qabacha was left with half of his strength after facing the onslaughts of Mangbarni and Mongols. During the Mongol siege of Multan in 621 AH/ 1224 AD, which continued for 42 days, he was constrained to open the door of his treasury to keep his people in good humour.[126] It must have adversely affected his resources. However, it goes to the credit of the Sultan that he waited for the opportune moment and opened campaign against them when they were most vulnerable. It was perhaps a deliberate ploy which worked in his favour very well.

The failure of the Indian princes to launch an offensive against Iltutmish when his position was far from stable is also surprising. In his early days, Iltutmish was faced with a host of problems and a consolidated effort from them would have exposed the vulnerability of the Sultan. But apart from declaring their independence in their respective domains, they remained unmoved. Why the Indian Princes remained mute spectators at a time when all out offensive against the infant Sultanate might have paid rich dividends is a moot point. In the following pages an attempt has been made to answer this very question.

Professor Muhammad Habib's argument that the refusal of the Turkish ruling class to recognize the caste system, which was basically discriminatory against the lower caste people, prevalent in Indian society in the thirteenth century won them the support of the deprived and the exploited among the Indians which facilitated the consolidation of their rule in India is not very convincing. We know that Muslim societies all over the world, after the institution of the Umayyad Caliphate in 661 AD, suffered from practically the same defect in the sense that they were always divided into the ruling clan and the ruled. In the Delhi Sultanate itself Ghiyasuddin Balban (r.1266 – 1286) was known to have insisted on the purity of blood for recruitment in state services. Minhaj's contempt for Imaduddin Raihan who became Wakil-i-Dar in 651 / 1254 is clearly evident from his account of this episode.[127] Barani says that low born Muslims (non-Turks) do not deserve to get good education lest they will compete with high born Muslims.[128] Barani's disdain for non-Turkish Muslims can also be seen in his criticism of Sultan Muhammad Tughluq (r.1325 – 1351) whom he held guilty for inducting Hindus and Indian Muslims into the nobility. Even Muhammad bin Qasim , the Arab conqueror of Sind, is reported to have allowed the continuation of the local custom which constrained the low caste Jats to be accompanied by their dogs whenever they ventured out of doors so that they might be recognized.[129] This

derogatory stipulation was imposed upon them by Brahmans and the Muslim conqueror did not abrogate it. Moreover, there is no evidence of mass conversion in the areas which were dominated by the Muslim rulers. Hence, the argument that it was the turnover of public opinion in favour of the Muslim conquerors that led to the downfall of Indian rulers seems a little far-fetched.

The contention of Simon Digby that the key to the survival of the Delhi Sultanate whether against any Indian state or in the face of the Mongol onslaughts perhaps lay in their access to and efficient control of military supplies specially war horses and elephants is perhaps more closer to the truth.[130] Digby has shown that the territory around Siwalik, Sunam, Samana, Tabarhinda, Thanesar, Kaithal and modern Haryana: areas that now form part of east Punjab immediately to the north-west of Delhi was the major horse breeding area in and around 1300.[131] The establishment of Turkish authority in these territories in the thirteenth century deprived the Indian princes of the supply of horses needed for their troops. This had an adverse effect on their military prowess who were now obliged to depend largely on foot-soldiers. For instance, Rana Chahar of Ajar, a powerful chief of the early thirteenth century possessed approximately 200,000 footmen but only 5,000 horses even up to the period of Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud (d. 1266).[132] We also know that when the ruler of Jagnagar marched upon Lakhnauti in 642 AH/ 1245 AD, his army consisted mainly of elephants and footmen and very few cavalry.[133]. Similarly, Bengal was known for its elephant reserves and supplied considerable number of this huge animal to the local princes who utilized them for the reinforcement of their military power. The inclusion of thirty elephants in the war indemnity that Husamuddin Iwaz Khalji paid to Iltutmish during the Bengal campaign (1225) is symptomatic of the significance of elephants as a war machine in the thirteenth century. It also indicates that during the period under review Bengal had the reputation

of being an important supplier of elephants. After Iltutmish's conquest of Bengal, the access of other Indian states to this animal was also drastically hampered and its impact on the military strength and preparedness of the Indian states can be easily understood. The political turmoil in Central Asia, which was another popular exporter of quality horses to India, in this period further restricted the availability of these war-animals for the Rajputs and other Indian princes. The non-availability of quality horses and elephants weakened the fighting power of the Indian potentates and worked in favour of the Turks which in turn facilitated the consolidation of their power in India.

The multi state system of the Rajputs also played havoc with their political and military stability. The emergence of regional states led to the localization of power and the idea of one central authority receded to the background. Aziz Ahmad writes that the Rajputs had evolved a 'murder cult' and that internecine civil strife with its paralyzing bitterness was the order of the day.[134] Each Rajput ruler was concerned with the protection of his own principality at the expense of their fellow princes. Most of the time they were indifferent to the miseries of their neighbours with whom they were involved in internecine warfare. They seldom thought of extending a helping hand to the neighbouring state in time of external aggression. For instance, when Iltutmish laid the siege of Ranthambhor, Mandor and Gwalior, the rulers of these places were left alone to face the enemy. The result of such one sided struggles was a foregone conclusion.

The clumsy and casual attitude of the Indian princes towards their forts also contributed to their dismal performance against the Turks. A modern writer has categorized the forts as offensive or defensive in terms of their functions.[135] However, in most cases forts of Indian rulers were used mainly for passive defense. Instead of coming out of the forts to face the

invaders, the Indians would lock themselves up within its precincts resulting in prolonged siege of the fort by the invaders. With a disillusioned and sometimes even hostile population in the countryside, the Indian rulers used to get completely cut-off from the outside world. Shortage of supply and provisions often worked in favour of the besiegers and resulted in the rout of the besieged. In nearly all his campaigns, whether against Gwalior, Ranthambhor, Kalinjar or even Uchch and Multan, Iltutmish adopted the strategy of surrounding the main citadel of the town from all sides and eventually captured them after prolonged and persistent siege. None of the Indian rulers dared to venture outside the fortification and fight a pitched battle against Iltutmish. The Rajputs were first-rate swordsmen and the Indian sword was the cynosure of all eyes. But none of them took the offensive and tried to seal the fate of Iltutmish in a hand to hand fight. They did not make full use of their potential and more often than not brought out their entire army putting all they had at stake on the fate of a single battle. Habibullah has rightly observed that the single defeat thus became a lasting catastrophe.[136]

The foregoing analysis clearly indicates that it was as much Iltutmish's intrepidity as the lack of planning and lopsided military preparedness on the part of his opponents, both Hindu and Muslim, that contributed to his success. By his martial dexterity, administrative acumen and diplomatic skill he was able to transform a tiny principality into a mighty empire in a short span of twenty six years. This was no mean achievement for a man who had started his career as an ordinary slave.

VI

Iltutmish, thus, came of age after prolonged struggle, incessant campaigns and untiring efforts. Ever since he ascended the throne at Delhi and took up residence at the fortress of Rai

Pithora,[137] he remained constantly dedicated to the task of strengthening of his Empire. Apart from his aforementioned major adversaries, he had to bear the brunt of the hostilities of his nobles on several occasions but he always got an upper hand in these brawls. In this task he was ably supported by his son Nasiruddin Mahmud. As governor of Awadh, Nasiruddin came to his father's rescue many times including the slaying of Bartu who had revolted against the Sultan and was reported to have killed hundred and twenty Muslims.[138] Iltutmish believed in centralized political authority and his ambition was to bring entire Hindustan under his control. Tact and diplomacy were his forte and patience was his most potent weapon. Whether it was Yalduz, Qabacha, Iwaz, or any Indian prince, he made the move against them when the time was ripe for it. He kept Yalduz in good humour and waited for the opportune moment to show his true colours. He moved against Qabacha when political turmoil in the north-west had subsided, Chengiz Khan had passed away and his own position at the centre was secure. Though Husamuddin Iwaz had paid the required tribute but he was kept under watch and was attacked at the right moment. Even Jalauddin Mangbarni was given a dexterous diplomatic reply and kept away from the center of political activity.

The sultan was a past master in making calculated moves. He never ventured a haphazard plunge in a contest with an adversary. He would wait and watch and act only at the right time. He had the ability to gauge the true nature of the problem and showed aggression or restraint as the situation demanded. In his entire career, he never acted in haste and seldom faltered in his judgment. At the same time, he knew his limitations well. During the first decade of his rule, he remained content with subjugating the opponents and did not mind restoring the vanquished to his territories if he agreed to pay a fixed annual tribute. He moved against his major adversaries and pretenders to the throne of Delhi in the second and third decade of his rule when he

commanded a strong army and his position had become unassailable. By the time of the last Uchch campaign, he had become so resourceful that he dispatched two armies simultaneously, one against Uchch and the second against Multan. By hard work and sheer dint of merit, he vindicated the choice of Delhi nobility who had invited him more than two decades ago to adorn the throne of Delhi. He proved beyond any doubt that he had the ability to hold the scepter and hold it well. When he came to Delhi in 1210, the city was a non-entity and the principality was politically instable and fragmented. When he died in 1236, it was known in the Islamic world as *Hazrat-i Delhi* and the principality had graduated to become a mighty empire. In 1210, Iltutmish had found chaos in and around Delhi but twenty six years later when he left for his heavenly abode he left order all around. The saga of the making of a Sultan took almost quarter of a century to complete but left it imprints on the sands of the time for ever.

NOTES:

[1] Isami, *Futuh al Salatin*, translated into English by Agha Mahdi Husain (London: Asia Publishing House, 1977), vol. II, p. 222

[2] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, translated into English by Major H. G. Raverty (Calcutta: The Asiatic Society, 1995; first published, 1881), vol. I, p. 498. Khwajah Nizamuddin Ahmed, *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, translated into English by Brajendra Nath De (Delhi: Low Price Publications, 1992, first published, 1911), vol. I. p. 45. Ferishta calls Sankuran as Shivuran, See Muhammad Qasim Hindu Shah Ferishta, *Tarikh-i Ferishta*, translated into English by John Briggs as *History of the Rise of Muhammadan Power in India* (Delhi: Low Price Publications, 2006; first published, 1829) vol. I, p.113

[3] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol I p. 499-500

[4] Ibid, p. 500

[5] Ibid p. 607 which states as follows 'Yalduz from Lahore and Ghazni entered into a compact with him….Lahore used to change hands among Tajuddin Yalduz, Nasiruddin Qabacha and Shamsuddin Iltutmish. See *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol I, p. 530. Yalduz probably captured Lahore after the death of Aram Shah. See Isami, *Futuh al Salatin,* p. 216

[6] Literally 'stand back'; a club, mace or baton with which they keep the mob from pressing too close in public solemnities.

[7] *Futuh al Salatin,* p. 216

[8] R.P. Tripathi, *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration* (Allahabad: Central Book Depot, 1992; first published, 1936) p. 24

[9] M. M. Shu'aib, 'Inscriptions from Palwal', *Epigraphia Indo Muslemica* (1911-12), pp. 2-3 as cited in Peter Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate: A Political and Military History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 30

[10] Hasan Nizami, *Taj ul Ma'asir*, translated into English by Bhagwat Saroop (Delhi: Saud Ahmad Dehlavi, 1998) p. 308

[11] Isami, *Futuh al Salatin,* p. 220

[12] Ibid, pp. 221-22

[13] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol I p. 505 & 608. According to Hasan Nizami, the struggle took place at Samana near Tarain. See *Taj ul Ma'asir,* p. 310.; Isami names the place as Hansi, *Futuh al Salatin,* p. 223

[14] *Taj ul Ma'asir,* p. 311

[15] *Futuh al Salatin,* p. 223

[16] Hasan Nizami writes that the exalted chief Muayidul Mulk (name not mentioned), shot an arrow to Tajuddin Yalduz which wounded him. See *Taj ul Ma'asir,* p. 317. However, Hasan Nizami has not mentioned as to what ultimately had happened to Yalduz.

[17] Aziz Ahmad, 'Sultan Shamsuddin Iltutmish', *Indian Historical Quarterly*, 1937, p. 130

[18] Yahya bin Ahmad Sarhindi, *Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi*, translated into English by Henry Beveridge (Delhi: Low Price Publications, 2010), p. 17

[19] Muhammad Habib and K.A. Nizami, *A Comprehensive History of India, vol. V, Part I: The Delhi Sultanate (AD 1206-1526),* (New Delhi: People's Publishing House, 1996; first published, 1970), p. 214

[20] The Battle of Andkhud was fought between Mu'izuddin Muhammad Ghori on one side and the forces of Khita and the Maliks of Turkistan on the other. In the battle, Mu'izuddin was completely defeated.

[21] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol I p. 532

[22] *Taj ul Ma'asir,* p. 327

[23] This name is similar to the name of Atsanqar kitta, one of the recalcitrants who revolted against Iltutmish and supported the son of Jandar Tatar in the rebellion at the commencement of Iltutmish's reign. In all probability, he was the same man. See *Taj ul Ma'asir,* p. 297

[24] Ibid, p. 323

[25] Ferishta, however, writes that Iltutmish attacked Nasiruddin Qabacha at Mansura on the banks of river Chenab and gained a comprehensive victory. See Ferishta, vol. I, p. 117

[26] For Hasan Nizami's acclamation of Prince Nasiruddin Mahmud, see *Taj ul Ma'asir,* pp. 332-33

[27] Ferishta, vol. I, p. 117

[28] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol I pp. 539-41

[29] Ibid, p. 534. The battle between Jalaluddin Mangbarni and Chengiz Khan was fought in 1221 A.D.

[30] Ibid, p. 607

[31] In those days, the entire valley of the Indus below the Salt Range was called Sind.

[32] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol I pp. 535-36

[33] Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya, the founder of Suhrawardi silsilah in India, in connivance with the Qazi of Multan is reported to have written letters to Iltutmish,inviting him to invade Multan. See Amir Hasan Sijzi, *Fawa'idul Fu'ad*, translated into English by Bruce B. Lawrence (New York: Paulist Press, 1992), p. 219. Also, Hamid bin Fazlullah Jamali Kamboh, *Siyar ul Arifin*, translated into Urdu by Muhammad Ayub Qadri (Lahore: Urdu Science Board, 1989; first published, 1976), p. 158

[34] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol I pp. 534; Ferishta, p. 241

[35] Ibid, p. 199

[36] Ibid, p. 539

[37] Sadiduddin Muhammad Awfi, *Jawami 'ul Hikayat wa Lavami 'ul Rivaayat* as cited in I.H. Siddiqui, *Indo Persian Historiography up to the Thirteenth Century* (Delhi:Primus Books, 2010), p. 81

[38] Sadiduddin Muhammad Awfi, *Lubab ul Albab* as cited in Peter Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate: A Political and Military History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.31

[39] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol I p. 613

[40] *Jawami 'ul Hikayat wa Lavami 'ul Rivaayat* as cited in I.H. Siddiqui's *Indo Persian Historiography up to the Thirteenth Century*, p.82

[41] Peter Jackson, p. 35

[42] Raverty however feels that the correct pronunciation may be Ihrawat though he failed to identify the place. Aziz Ahmad links it with Amri, a town situated below Sehwan on the river Indus in Sind. See Muhammad Aziz Ahmad, *Political History and Institutions of the Early Turkish Empire of Delhi (1206-1290 A.D.)*, (New Delhi: Oriental Books Reprint Corporation, first Indian edition, 1972), p. 169

[43] The fortress of Bhakkar was on the hillock surrounded from all sides by the five rivers of Punjab. For its defense, heavy boulders were thrown all around in the water. In case of the lack of knowledge about its safe channels, the boats used to collide with them and get damaged. The enemy thus could not reach the fortifications.

[44] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol I, p. 613. Awfi provides a little different account when he writes that Malik Azam Barbak and Muhammad Izzuddin Kuzvi were ordered to proceed towards Bhakkar from the side of Aror (possibly Ahrawat) whereas Malik Nasiruddin and Malik ul umara Aitmar were deputed at the head of a strong army at Bhakkar from an opposite direction. But they were unable to capture the fort. The Sultan realized that the fort could not be captured without the help of the Wazir. He directed Nizam ul Mulk to proceed to Bhakkar. Soon the fort was reduced without much difficulty. See *Jawami 'ul Hikayat wa Lavami 'ul Rivaayat* as cited in I.H. Siddiqui's *Indo Persian Historiography up to the Thirteenth Century*, pp. 81-82. Awfi's purpose in highlighting the achievements of Junaidi and giving him the entire credit for the success at Bhakkar is quite understandable. Nizam ul Mulk Junaidi was the patron of Awfi and the latter completed his work under Junaidi's patronage. Like any other panegyrist, he tried to exaggerate the accomplishments of his patron. On many other occasions while describing different events, Awfi did the same.

[45] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol I, p. 613

[46] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol II, p. 728

[47] *Jawami 'ul Hikayat wa Lavami 'ul Rivaayat* as cited in I.H. Siddiqui's *Indo Persian Historiography up to the Thirteenth Century*, p. 82

[48] *Futuh al Salatin,* p. 225

[49] Aziz Ahmad making use of the printed text of *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri* writes his name as Shihabuddin Habsh while Raverty calls him as Chatisar or Jatisa in conformity with the oldest copies. See, Muhammad Aziz Ahmad, *Political History and Institutions of the Early Turkish Empire of Delhi*, op. cit. p. 171

[50] See A. B. M. Habibullah, *The Foundation of Muslim Rule in India* (Allahabad: Central Publishing House, 1976; first published, 1945), p. 70, fn. 79; Also Peter Jackson, p. 13

[51] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol I, pp. 549-50

[52] Ibid, p. 575

[53] A very interesting anecdote was related regarding Husamuddin's arrival in Hindustan. It is told that once he was proceeding with his laden ass towards a place called Pushtah Afroz (the burning hill, or mountain) in Ghur when he met two darweshes. They were hungry and asked for food. Husamuddin provided them with meal and water. Thereafter they turned their faces to Husamuddin and said, 'Husamuddin! Go thou to Hindustan, for that place which is the extreme (point) of Muhammadanism, we have given unto thee', *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol I, p. 581

[54] Ibid, p. 578

[55] Ibid, p. 581

[56] Peter Jackson, p. 36

[57] For the inscriptions on Husamuddin Iwaz Khalji's coins, see A. H. Dani, 'Did Ghiyath al Din Iwad Khalji of Bengal receive investiture from the Khalifah?', *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society (JPHS)* 3, 1955, p. 113

[58] Richard M. Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier* (1204-1760), (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2010; first Indian edition, 1994), p. 11

[59] Ibid

[60] Simon Digby, *War Horse and Elephant in the Delhi Sultanate: A Study of Military Supplies* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1971) p. 21-22

[61] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol I, pp. 567-68

[62] Simon Digby, op. cit. p. 42

[63] See *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol I, pp. 590-91

[64] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol I, p. 593; Nizamuddin Ahmad mentioned the amount as eighty thousand silver tankahs, see *Tabaqat-i- Akbari*, p. 66

[65] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol I, p. 593 & 610

[66] Prince Nasiruddin Mahmud became the governor of Awadh in 623 / 1226. See *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol I, p. 628. Earlier he was seen as the governor of Lahore.

[67] It is difficult to identify this noble though in the list of the maliks of Iltutmish, a noble by the name of Malik Bahauddin Bulad (Pulad)-i-Nasiri is mentioned. See *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, vol. I, p. 626

[68] Ibid, pp. 629-30

[69] Richard Eaton, op. cit., p. 39

[70] *Futuh al Salatin,* p. 241

[71] For the viewpoint of Habibullah, see *The Foundation of Muslim Rule in India*, p. 83 & p. 92, fn. 69. According to Raverty, his name was Ikhtiyaruddin Daulat Shah-i-Balka. He calls him the son of Husamuddin Iwaz Khalji which is incorrect. See *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, vol. I, p. 626, also fn 09 on the same page. On coins his name was inscribed as Alaud Dunya wad Din Abul Ghazi Daulat Shah bin Mawdud. See Nelson Wright, *The Coins and Metrology of the Sultans of Delhi* (New Delhi: Orient Books Reprint Corporation, 1974)p. 21, no. 53A

[72] See Awfi as quoted in I.H. Siddiqui's *Indo Persian Historiography up to the Thirteenth Century*, p. 85

[73] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, vol. I, pp. 618-19. Minhaj is said to have heard that when Iltutmish reached Lakhnauti to quell the revolt of Balka Khalji, he saw the good works done by Husamuddin Iwaz. From that time onwards, whenever the name of Husamuddin chanced to arise he always used to address the Bengal ruler as 'Sultan Ghiyasuddin Khalji'. It was a token of respect for the ruler who was so just and benevolent. See *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, vol. I, p. 587

[74] Richard Eaton, op. cit., pp. 34-5

[75] Ibid

[76] *Taj ul Ma'asir,* p. 304

[77] Ibid, p. 308; Also see Ferishta, vol. I, p. 117

[78] The fort of Ranthambhor lies in the south-east corner of Jaipur state on an isolated rock 1,578 ft above sea-level, and surrounded by massive wall strengthened by towers and bastions. It was held by Jadon Rajputs before its conquest by Privthviraj in the twelfth century. See Muhammad Aziz Ahmad, *Political History and Institutions of the Early Turkish Empire of Delhi*, pp. 167-68

[79] Mandor is a ruined town in Jodhpur state.

[80] See *The Foundation of Muslim Rule in India*, pp. 83-84; Also see M.S. Ahluwalia, 'The Sultanate Penetration into Rajasthan and Central Asia- A Study based on Epigraphic Evidence', *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 1966, p. 145

[81] *The Foundation of Muslim Rule in India*, p. 84

[82] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, vol. I, p. 611

[83] It is said that Govindraja's son Vallana ruled for some time as a feudatory of Iltutmish. His brother Prahlad neglected the duties of government and spent his time in hunting and merry making. After Prahlad's death, mutual jealousy between Viranarayana (Prahlad's son) and Vagbhatta(Prahlad's brother) plunged the principality into disorder. After knowing this fact, Iltutmish had Viranarayana murdered. Thereafter he sent one of his generals against Vagabhatta. The general attacked the fort, captured it and killed Vagabhatta in 1226. For details see Muhammad Habib and K. A. Nizami, *A Comprehensive History of India, vol. V, Part II: The Delhi Sultanate (AD 1206-1526),* (New Delhi: People's Publishing House, 1993; first published, 1970), p. 829

[84] *Futuh al Salatin,* p. 235

[85] *Tabaqat-i- Akbari*, p. 67. The Persian texts in Bashiruddin's work for the respective couplets go like this: khabar bahil sama burd Gabreil Ameen/ zi fath nama-i-Sultan 'ahd Shamsuddin/ ki ay Mala'ika quds asmanhi ra/ badin bisharat bandid killa (kula) wa ayin/ ki az bilade mumalik Shahenshah-i-Islam/ kushad bar digar qila sipihr amin/ Shah i Mujahid wa Ghazi ki dasht teghash ra/ rawani Haidaar-i-Karrar mi kunad tahsin. See Bashiruddin Ahmad, *Waqiat-i-Darul Hukumat –i-Delhi* (Delhi: Urdu Academy, 2012), vol. I, p. 95. For correction of fifth and sixth lines, see Muhammad Aziz Ahmad, *Political History and Institutions of the Early Turkish Empire of Delhi*, p. 168; for English spellings of the Persian words, I have consulted F. Steingass, *A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Pvt. Limited, reprint, 2008)

[86] *A Comprehensive History of India, vol. V, Part II: The Delhi Sultanate (AD 1206-1526)*, p. 786. Habibullah describes the event in a different manner when he writes that Jaitra Singh repulsed Iltutmish with heavy losses. *The Foundation of Muslim Rule in India*, p. 84. *A Comprehensive History of India, vol. V,* being a later publication, is likely to present a better version since the authors are likely to have consulted more sources on the issue.

[87] *The Foundation of Muslim Rule in India*, p. 84. Habibullah points out that Viradhavala of Gujarat assisted Jaitra Sinha of Nagda and sent an army for his help. It may have led to Iltutmish's subsequent expedition against Gujarat. Ibid, p. 93, fn. 86

[88] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, vol. II, p. 728. Sambhar is a town on the Salt Lake in Rajasthan, north of Ajmer.

[89] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, vol. I, p. 619

[90] Ibid, p. 620. Ferishta and Nizamuddin Ahmad consider the number up to 300. See Ferishta, p.119; *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, p. 68

[91] It seems that Nizamuddin Ahmad confused poet Taj Reza with the secretary of the state, Taj ul Mulk Mahmud and writes that Tajuddin Reza, the Secretary of State wrote this quatrain. See *Tabaqat-i- Akbari*, p. 68. Ferishta mention the name as Tajuddin Zoobery. See Ferishta, p. 119

[92] *Tabaqat-i- Akbari*, p. 68. The Persian text goes like this: har qila ki sultan salatin bagirift/ az aun Khuda wa nusrat-i-din bagirift/ an qila Gwalior wa husn wa hasin/ dar sitta-mi'at sana salasin bagirift. See *Waqiat-i-Darul Hukumat –i-Delhi*, p. 96. Also Muhammad Aziz Ahmad, *Political History and Institutions of the Early Turkish Empire of Delhi*, pp. 174, fn 2

[93] Naubat means a very large kettle-drum struck at stated hours or/and a musical band playing at stated times before the palace of a king.

[94] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, vol. II, p. 732

[95]. Mahir seems to be Mahet, a vast collection of ruin spread partly in Gonda and partly in Bahraich district of Awadh, U.P. Mahaun is in the district of Rohtak. Muhammad Aziz Ahmad, *Political History and Institutions of the Early Turkish Empire of Delhi*, p. 176, fn 2

[96] M.S. Ahluwalia, op. cit., p. 145

[97] Ibid. p 145. Also see *The Foundation of Muslim Rule in India*, p. 83

[98] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, vol. II, p. 733

[99] Habibullah identifies him with Chahardeva of Jajapella dynasty who later supplanted the Pratihars of Narwar. See *The Foundation of Muslim Rule in India*, pp. 85-6. K. A. Nizami agreed with Habibullah. Aziz Ahmad however considers him as Acharaj, a Brahmin sect in the Hissar district of Punjab. See Muhammad Aziz Ahmad, *Political History and Institutions of the Early Turkish Empire of Delhi*, p. 174, fn 4

[100] *Futuh al Salatin,* p. 243

[101] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, vol. I, pp. 622-23

[102] Richard M. Eaton, 'Temple Desecration and Indo-Muslim States' in *Essays on Islam and Indian History* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 105

[103] For these references and more, see ibid, p. 106; also see K. A. Nizami, *Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India during the Thirteenth Century* (New Delhi: Asia Publishing House, 1961), p. 88

[104] 'Temple Desecration and Indo-Muslim States', p. 112

[105] Satish Chandra, *Essays on Medieval Indian History* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 358

[106] Even the term infidel was not applied only in the context of an Indian ruler, or against the Hindus. Minhaj has time and again used this term for the non-Muslims in Central Asia, especially against the infidels of Turkistan. While waging a war against them, Mu'izuddin is reported to have said, '…..we will do battle face to face, and see unto whom Almighty God will bestow the victory. I shall at least have acquired the merit of having fought for the faith as by creed enjoined.' See *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, vol. I, p. 475. Aziz Ahmad informs that Sultan Mu'izuddin sent a letter to the ruler of Bamiyan in which he wrote, ' I have determined to wage a holy war against the infidels of Turkistan.' See Muhammad Aziz Ahmad, *Political History and Institutions of the Early Turkish Empire of Delhi*, p. 83. It shows that the word 'infidel' and the slogan of holy war were not used only in the context of Indian states. Elsewhere also it had been utilized.

[107] Nasawi, *Sirat-i-Sultan Jalaluddin* , as cited in Peter Jackson, op. cit., p. 39

[108] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, vol. I, pp. 550-51

[109] *Futuh al Salatin,* pp. 414-15

[110] Ferishta, p.242

[111] Sunil Kumar writes that that in was in 1228 A.D., when the balance of Power had visibly shifted in favour of Delhi that a large migration of Ulama and Ahl-i-qalam into Delhi Sultanate had been noticed. This theory cannot be pressed too far and is subject to debate. Iltutmish had avoided a head to head collusion with Prince Mangbarni while Qabacha had been repeatedly defeated by the armies of both Mangbarni and Chengiz Khan. It must have drawn the attention of the men of letters towards Delhi. Therefore, it is hard to believe that they waited for Qabacha's death to finally move to Delhi. The examples of Minhaj, Awfi, Kufi which Sunil Kumar had provided were of high notables enjoying full patronage during Qabacha's reign. Therefore, they had no reason to move to Delhi unless and until the patron himself dies. But for the rest this would not have been the case. Secondly, if Qabacha was providing so much

peace and prosperity to his subjects and was so powerful, there was no reason for Prince Mangbarni to ask for help from Delhi. He would have tried to forge a pact with Qabacha. For Sunil Kumar's view, see Sunil Kumar, *The Emergence of the Delhi Sultanate* (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2007), pp. 121-2

[112] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, vol. I, p. 345 & 626

[113] *Futuh al Salatin,* pp.2 44-45; also Peter Jackson, p. 40

[114] Peter Jackson, p. 41

[115] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, vol. I, p. 620

[116] See Peter Jackson, p. 40

[117] For Husain Karmil abandonment, see Nasawi as cited in Peter Jackson, p. 40; for Binaltigin desertion of Qabacha, see *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, vol. I, p. 200

[118] *War Horse and Elephant in the Delhi Sultanate: A Study of Military Supplies,* pp. 18-19; also see Ali Athar, *Military Technology and Warfare in the Sultanate of Delhi* (New Delhi: Icon Publications Pvt. Limited, 2006), p. 49

[119] *War Horse and Elephant in the Delhi Sultanate: A Study of Military Supplies,* p. 16

[120] Ibid, p. 17-18; Ali Athar, p. 48

[121] *Taj ul Ma'asir,* p. 317

[122] Ibid

[123] Supriya Verma and Jaya Menon, 'Archeology and the Construction of Identities in Medieval North India', *Studies in History*, 24, 2 (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2008), p. 179 & 186

[124] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, vol. II, p. 756

[125] Ibid, pp. 733-34

[126] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, vol. I, pp. 537-38

[127] For Raihan's appointment to this post, see *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, vol. I, p. 694

[128] For Barani's contemptuous attitude towards the low-born, see Ziyauddin Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, translated into Urdu by Sayyid Moin ul Haqq (Lahore: Urdu Science Board, 2004), p. 228; also Ziyauddin Barani, *Fatwa-i-Jahandari*, as cited in Peter Hardy, *Historians of Medieval India* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Pvt. Limited,2011; first published, 1960), p. 27 & 29

[129] Peter Jackson, p. 15

[130] *War Horse and Elephant in the Delhi Sultanate: A Study of Military Supplies,* p. 20

[131] Ibid, p. 27

[132] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, vol. I, p. 691; Yahya bin Ahmad Sarhindi, *Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi*, translated into English by Henry Beveridge (Delhi: Low Price Publications, 2010), p. 34

[133] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, vol. II, p. 738-39

[134] *Political History and Institutions of the Early Turkish Empire of Delhi*, p. 45

[135] Ali Athar, p. 97

[136] *The Foundation of Muslim Rule in India*, p. 278

[137] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, vol. I, p. 598, fn. 08

[138] Ibid, pp. 628-29

CHAPTER FOUR

Foreign Powers at Home: Encounter with Jalaluddin Mangbarni, the Mongol problem and relations with the Caliph of Baghdad

The climate of these parts is not favourable and there is no tract suited to the Sultan.[1]

Iltutmish to Mangbarni

Medieval India owed him not a little gratitude for helping her to escape the Mongol fury which had uprooted more powerful and far older Empires.[2]

A. B. M. Habibullah

Iltutmish was the only Indian Muslim ruler who received the recognition from the Abbasid Caliph at Baghdad.[3]

Peter Jackson

Foreign potentates, like the internal rivals, were likely to be equally detrimental to the stability of the Sultanate. While the internal enemies had the potential of threatening the peace and tranquility of the empire, the external aggression was a direct challenge to the security, integrity and even the very existence of the Sultanate. The reign of Iltutmish witnessed two significant developments which were bound to have long term effects in terms of the stability of the Sultanate as well as its relations with the contemporary foreign powers. The first incident was the arrival of the Khwarazm Prince, Jalaluddin Mangbarni in the Indian sub-continent and the subsequent appearance of Mongols, in his wake, on the Indian frontiers. Needless to say that the appearance of the representatives of two great powers of Central Asia, the Khwarazmian Empire and the Mongol, had dangerous portents for the security of Indian states. It had the potential of rupturing the very fabric of the Indians society and could bring in large scale destruction and loss

of men and money. The other event of great consequence was the arrival of the emissaries of Baghdad at the court of Iltutmish with the deed of investiture (*manshur*) and the robe of honour (*khil`at*) from the Caliph. It bolstered the Iltutmish's position as an independent sovereign and enhanced the status of the Delhi Sultanate in the Islamic world. While the first incident threatened to the crack the foundation of the Sultanate, the second cemented the place of the Sultanate in the comity of Muslim states. This chapter examines the impact of these two events on the Delhi Sultanate and is divided into three sections. Section one deals with the events following the coming of Jalaluddin Mangbarni to Hindustan and its effects on the fortunes of Iltutmish and his adversaries. Section two is concerned with Iltutmish's efforts to gain the investiture from the Caliph of Baghdad and the subsequent dispatch of the same from Baghdad. Section three presents the concluding remarks.

I

We know that Chengiz Khan's invasion of Western Asia (1218-23) led to the downfall of a number of Muslim sates of the region many of which were torn into pieces by the unprecedented acts of cruelty and barbarism on the part of Mongols. In course of these onslaughts Alauddin Khwarazm Shah, the Sultan of Khwarazm, perhaps bore the maximum brunt of Mongol fury. Expelled from his territories and chased by Chengiz Khan, Alauddin died as a fugitive in the Caspian region. His son and successor Jalaluddin Mangbarni moved towards Ghazni which has earlier being allotted as his fief by his deceased father. Jalaluddin was however not destined to live in peace for long. Defeated by the Mongols in many close encounters, the Prince decided to try his luck in India. The arrival of Mangbarni in Sindh with Mongols in hot pursuit plunged the entire north-west frontier of the Delhi Sultanate in great crisis.

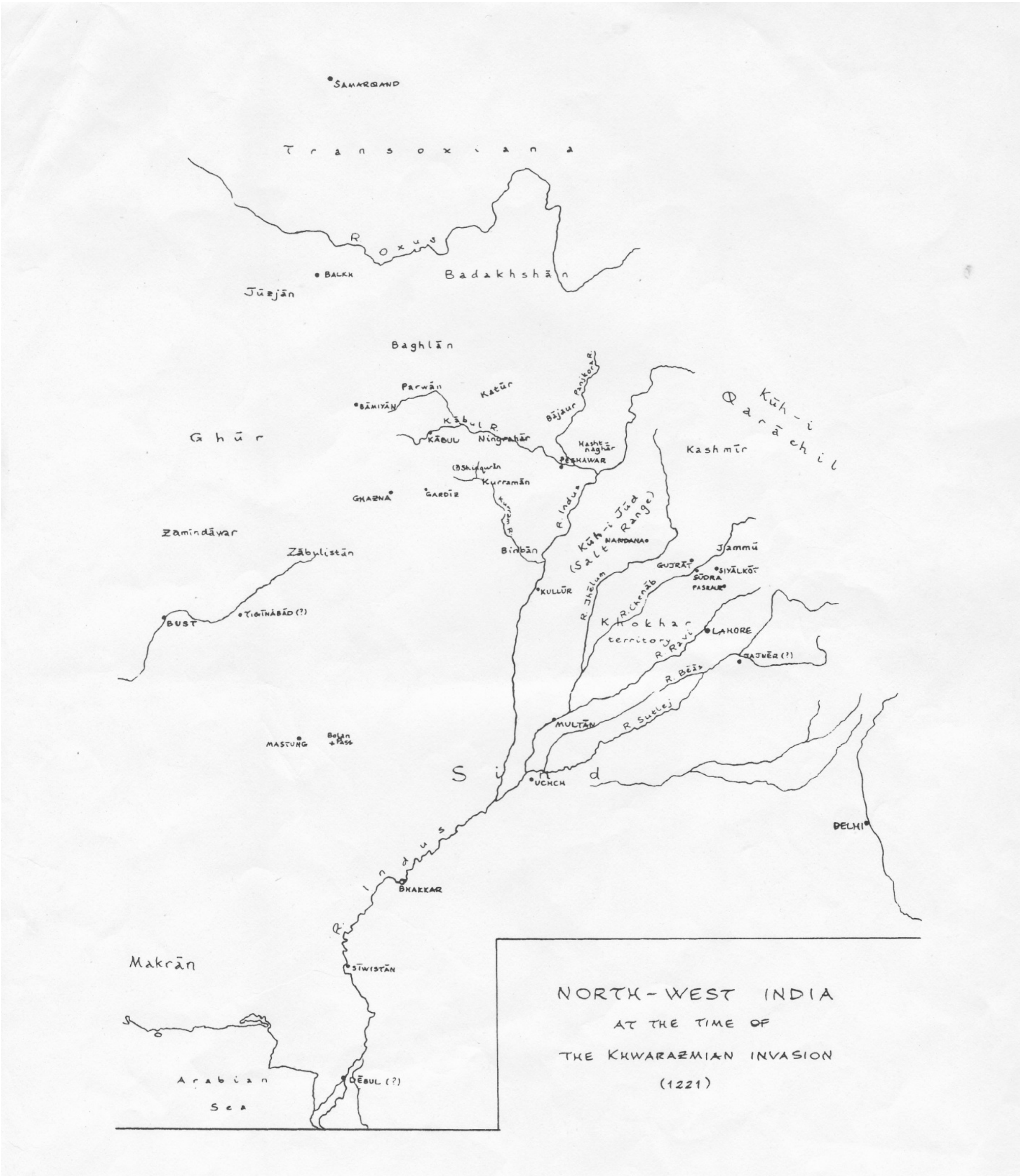
Frontier, in literal sense is a border separating two countries. It, in fact, determines the limits of the region within which a state can exercise its sovereign rights. "A Frontier" writes Mujtaba Rizvi 'denotes a region or zone having width as well as length whereas a boundary refers to a line.'[4] This definition signifies that a frontier consists of an area. If a boundary does not clearly define the territories of two neighbouring states, a frontier remains vague and indefinite. Sir Norman J. G. Pounds writes, 'primitive people in general have simple ideas and concepts. A no man's land separates the territory, that is inhabited and used by tribes, from that occupied by the next. This is a frontier in a strict sense, a border zone, unclaimed, unsettled and unused into which neither side claims nor exercises an exclusive control.'[5] In this sense, a frontier can also be a no man's land between the territories of two contiguous states. No man dared traverse it except under the protection of armed forces. The physical features of India ensured that the problem of defense was minimal from the north and northeastern side. The huge Himalayas form the natural barrier stretching on the northern borders of India. Though there are few passes, providing passage to an invading army from the side of Himalayas, it was not easy to do so always. In the north-west side of the subcontinent, however, the scenario was not the same. Though it also had chain of mountains such as Kirthar, Suleiman range, the slopes of the Hindukush and the Himalayas which created a natural frontier on the west as well. But the passes of these ranges were quite accessible and it is through these passes that people belonging to diverse came to India and settled here. The north-west frontier therefore played a significant role in the history of the Indian subcontinent. Whenever we talk about the frontier problem or a frontier policy in the context of medieval India, it was in most cases related with the North-West Frontier Provinces. U.N. Day opines that the whole question of north-west frontier has two aspects. Firstly, the protection and control of the passes which were like gates; and secondly the

subjugation and pacification of the tribal regions situated in the neighbouring areas of these passes.[6] We also know that the political condition on the north-west kept on changing from time to time which led to different frontier policy in different time. When the government of both the sides of the mountainous region in the frontier was the same, the defense of the boundary was not a matter of concern. For instance during the reign of Mu'izuddin Muhammad Ghori the protection of the frontier provinces was not a major issue as the Indian possessions were a part of the kingdom of Ghazni. However, during the periods when different political entities existed on each side of the border, this region played a vital role in the stability of states existing on both sides and was crucial in determining their foreign policy. The frontier provinces then naturally assumed tremendous significance.

After the death of Mu'izuddin Muhammad Ghori when his kingdom was divided among his slave officers, rival political formations came to be established themselves in Ghazni, Lahore, Uchch and Multan. The problem of frontier arose when Tajuddin Yalduz at Ghazni started claiming the Indian territories on the ground of his occupying the seat of master's government. This claim was not likely to be acknowledged by his rivals Qabacha and Aibak who were ruling on each side of the frontier. In fact, one frontier province Lahore was the capital of Aibak and the other Multan was a key district of Qabacha's territory. These factors weighed high in the formulation of policy for the security and protection of the frontier provinces. However, the issue never got settled and kept on lingering during the reign of Aibak. When Iltutmish ascended the throne, he made Delhi his capital. By now, a regular route had developed between Delhi, Multan and Lahore. The route from Delhi to Bhatner (present Hanumangarh) was common and passed through Rohtak, Hansi and Sirsa. At Bhatner, it bifurcated into two routes with one turning towards northwards and passing through Bhatinda, Muktesar and Kasur reached Lahore; the

other continued in the westerly direction along the bank of Ghaggar leading to Uchch via Marot and then diverted northwards and reached Multan.[7] Therefore, fortification and defense of Lahore and Multan was essential for the security of Delhi. Hence Iltutmish was obliged to keep his vigilant eyes on these provinces with a view to keep both cities in his hand as much as possible. The frontier problem assumed a precarious dimension when Alauddin Khwarazm Shah invaded Ghazni and dislodged Yalduz from there who crossed the frontiers and captured Lahore. With extraordinary courage and sagacity, Iltutmish ultimately defeated Yalduz and settled his relations with him for good (for details, see chapter 3). Alauddin Khwarazm Shah conferred Ghur and Ghazni on his son Jalaluddin Mangbarni who began to rule these regions through his deputies. Ghazni was, for instance, given to Malik Kuriz.[8] Ghazni under the control of Khwarazm Shah was a greater menace and multiplied the frontier problems manifold. It embroiled a great foreign power into the already murky power politics of the north-west frontier. A sound frontier policy was obviously the need of the hour. When Mangbarni reached Ghazni, the frontier problem assumed a far more serious dimension. Earlier, the struggle at the frontier was confined to the successor states that had emerged on the ruins of the Ghorid dominions. Now, a Central Asian Prince with a considerable following was all set to fish in the already troubled waters of the frontier. Worst of all, a powerful Mongol army led by Chengiz Khan arrived at the gate of India pursuing Mangbarni all the way from Khwarazm.[9] Though the first intrusion of the Mongols into the north-west region occurred during the reign of Iltutmish, they were destined to pose a recurring problem for the Sultans of Delhi in the thirteenth and fourteenth century. The Sultan of Delhi was therefore required to move tactfully and had to chalk out a pragmatic frontier policy.

The arrival of Mangbarni in India generated multifarious problems. When Chengiz Khan attacked Khwarazm, Mangbarni has already left the place for Ghazni. Not finding Mangbarni in Khwarazm, Chengiz Khan sent a detachment of his army under Nuin Fiku (Qutuqu) towards Ghazni in search of the Prince.[10] In the mean time many officers of the vanquished Khwarazm Shah had joined Mangbarni in Ghazni along with their supporters. Mir Khwand writes that Saifuddin Aghrak with his forty thousand Kankalis (a Turkish tribe. The name signifies invention and was given to the tribe owing to their ingenuity in constructing carriages), and Khaljis; Yamin Malik, the Governor of Herat with his valiant Kurds also joined his standard.[11] When the troops of Fiku Nuin (Qutuqu) reached the confines of Barwan (located near the source of Logar river), Jalaluddin advanced against the Mongol army and defeated it.[12] Subsequently he defeated them in two more encounters. Unfortunately, a squabble over the division of war- booty clouded the relationship between the Iqhraks,[13] Ajamis and Khawarazmis so much so that Saifuddin Aghrak left Manbarni's camp in anger and went off with his troops[14] towards Kirman and Sinquran.[15] On the other hand, the defeated Qutuqu returned to Chengiz Khan and persuaded him to move towards Ghazni.[16] A battle was fought between the troops of Jalaluddin Mangbarni and the army of Chengiz Khan on the banks of river Indus. On this occasion, Chengiz Khan was also joined by his sons, Chagatai and Uktae.[17] In the face of large and ever increasing Mongol forces Mangbarni's already crippled army had practically no chance to last for long. In spite of fighting his heart out, it became increasingly impossible for Mangbarni to offer resistance to Chengiz Khan for a long time. Finally he turned his horse and charging towards the river Indus, jumped into it and sailed across to the other bank and was thus forced to set his feet in the Indian Territory.[18] All his followers and family members who were left behind were killed. This incident took place in Rajab 618 AH/ August- September, 1221 AD.



Map 5: North-west India at the time of the arrival of Prince Jalaluddin Mangbarni (read Gujrat as Kujah)

This map has been taken from Peter Jackson, 'Jalaluddin, the Mongols and the Khwarazmian Conquest of the Panjab and Sind,' *Iran,* vol. 28, 1990

Uktae was sent back to Ghazni where he ravaged the territory and slain the inhabitants, barring a few artisans. Chagatai tried to capture Mangbarni when the report came that he had re-crossed the Indus in order to bury his dead but the prince made good his escape and the Mongol prince had to return empty handed. Thereafter, Chengiz Khan dispatched two tumans (20,000 men) under Dorbei Doqshin[19] to pursue the prince beyond the Sind. Peter Jackson suggests that this expedition took place at the end of the winter of 1221 when Chengiz Khan began his march towards his homeland.[20] Dorbei also failed to accomplish his task.

Minhaj writes that after the defeat of Mangbarni, Chengiz Khan decided to advance from the banks of Indus towards Gibari (Giri) in pursuit of Ighrakis[21] (tribesmen under Saifuddin Aghrak, who had deserted Mangbarni before the battle of Indus.). He took the fortress of Giri and other forts of Koh Payah and stayed in the region for three months. Juwaini also writes about the Mongols taking up winter quarters in the plain of Hindustan where the local ruler Salar Ahmad submitted to him and provided supplies for his troops.[22] Juwaini identifies this place as Kutur. Peter Jackson opines that there is no contradiction between the two testimonies. Both Katur and a locality called Girak are listed in Babur's memories among places lying in the mountains of Kafiristan, north east and east of Kabul.[23]

It was at this juncture that Chengiz Khan began his homeward journey taking an eastward route through Koh-i-Qarachil (Himalayas), Lakhnauti (Bengal) and Kamrud (Assam). Minhaj writes that the Khan sent envoys to the court of Sultan Iltutmish seeking his permission to pass through his territory.[24] But he did not move in that direction on account of inauspicious omens. Shortly after that he was forced to return when he came to know about the revolt of the Khans of Tamghaj and Tingit. Therefore, he changed his mind and decided to return by the same route through which he had arrived.[25] Having crossed the Oxus, he took up his winter quarters in the

neighborhood of Samarqand sometime in November 1222.[26] Juwaini at one place writes that Dorbei was ordered to move to India after the army had crossed the Oxus on its way back to Mongolia. Peter Jackson however suggests that that Dorbei was sent after Mangbarni on two separate occasions. His failure to apprehend Mangbarni on the first occasion had infuriated Chengiz Khan so much that when Dorbei rejoined the main army at Samarqand, he was again dispatched to capture the Khwarazm prince which, as mentioned above, also ended in a failure.[27]

The visit of Chengiz Khan to the banks of Indus was the first episode in a long series of Mongol invasions on India. At this moment, fortunately, it did not cause any harm to the Sultanate of Delhi. Most of the devastation was caused in the buffer regions that were lying between the Mongols and the Delhi Sultanate, namely the territories controlled by Mangbarni and Nasiruddin Qabacha (see below). It is no wonder that Iltutmish moved with great caution and never tried to extend his authority in the cis- Indus region till the time Chengiz Khan (d. 1227) was alive. The Mongol attack in 1223-24 was not directed against the Delhi Sultanate and in fact only the territories of Qabacha and Mangbarni bore the brunt of Mongol invasion. K. A. Nizami opines that when Chengiz Khan sent his envoys to Iltutmish, the latter probably used this opportunity to enter into a non-aggression pact with the Mongols according to which no enemy of the Mongols would be given shelter by the Sultan of Delhi and, in return, the territorial integrity of the Turkish Empire was to be respected by the Mongols.[28] However, no concrete evidence to support this contention has been found up till now. A. B. M. Habibullah also has not refuted the possibility of a pact with Chengiz Khan which perhaps obliged the Khan to refrain from undertaking operations in the territory of Iltutmish. According to Habibullah, ‘it speaks well of his (Chingiz’s) moderation and his scrupulous observance of international practice.’[29] It can however be suggested that the Mongol Khan was not really interested in invading India. His

primary interest lied in Central Asia. Peter Jackson also believes that there was no reason why Chengiz should have regarded India as an immediate objective, at par with the empire of Khwarazm Shah. At this time, Khwarazm, Transoxiana and Ghazni region had yet to be pacified and while he was based south of the Hindukush, several divisions of his army were engaged in vital campaigns to suppress revolts in Khurasan.[30] Though Chengiz Khan was undoubtedly a greater threat, Iltutmish immediate cause of concern was Jalaluddin Mangbarni whose entry into India would have motivated Chengiz Khan to invade India. More over Jalaluddin Mangbarni himself was a formidable rival and warrior and could be utterly dangerous for the Sultanate once he gathered his strength. He was also one of the few warriors of the time who could offer effective resistance to the mighty Mongols and his continued engagement with them was bound to augur well for Iltutmish.

Jalaluddin Mangbarni finally set his feet on the Indian soil after the departure of Chengiz Khan after crossing the river Indus.[31] He was joined by six or seven of his followers who had escaped drowning in the river. Soon fifty more men attached themselves to his retinue. He came to know that some locals in the Salt Range (Koh-i-Jud) were indulging in merry making nearby. He attached them at night and captured their arms and animals. In another skirmish, he obtained huge booty with the help of which he set up his own army. Nesauri writes that the ruler of Koh-i-Jud, Rana Shatra led a body of six thousand troops against the prince but was defeated and killed in the ensuing engagement.[32] This victory proved to be a shot in Manbarni's arms and the strength of his army swelled to almost three thousand. When Chengiz Khan, who was in the neighbourhood of Ghazni, heard about these triumphs of the Khwarazm Prince, he dispatched an army to pursue him (Dorbei first campaign). When Jalaluddin Mangbarni heard about the coming of Mongol contingents he decided to move towards Delhi.

Mangbarni's advance towards Delhi was an alarming development for Iltutmish. Juwaini writes that when the Khwarazm Prince was at a distant of two or three days journey to Delhi, he sent a messenger to Iltutmish seeking a place of refuge and a joint offensive against the Mongols.[33] This placed Iltutmish in a dilemma. On the one hand, Mangbarni was a fugitive who was being chased by the Mongols. His arrival in the capital at this juncture was bound to invite the Mongol ire and could prove perilous for the Sultanate. On the other hand, Mangbarni himself was a potent rival. No sooner than he arrived at Ghazni, chiefs of various tribe and clans had flocked around him like swarms.[34] In India also he took little time in gathering a force of around three thousand armed men. Providing him shelter in the heart of the Empire was tantamount to jeopardizing his own position. He had given a tough time to the Mongols and was eminently capable of creating trouble for the Sultanate as well. The authors of *Tarikh-i-Alfi* writes that just like Khwarazmshahis were afraid of the Mongols, in the same way were the soldiers of Hind afraid of Sultan Mangbarni.[35] Moreover, the court of Iltutmish was an asylum to a large number of Central Asians who could be potential supporter of Mangbarni's cause. There was every likelihood that these men could shift their loyalties to the Khwarazm Prince once they found him amongst themselves.

Amidst these predicaments, Iltutmish received Ainul Mulk, the envoy of the Khwarazm Prince. After long and hard deliberations and apprehensive of the possible consequences of Mangbarni's sojourn in India, Iltutmish got the envoy killed. Shortly after that, he sent an envoy of his own with suitable presents and an evasive reply to the distinguished guest. The Sultan expressed his inability to accede to Mangbarni's request on the ground that neither the climate of India was suitable nor was there any place in the sultanate appropriate for lodging a distinguished personage like the Prince. In any case by killing the envoy of Mangbarni, Iltutmish

had already made his intentions clear to the Prince. Mangbarni had therefore no other alternative but to retreat towards the Salt Range. Needless to say that Iltutmish's apprehensions were not baseless for Juwaini writes that Mangbarni had by that time succeeded in raising an army of 10,000 soldiers.[36] Later, when he reached Sind, Tajuddin Binaltigin, a distant relative of the Prince, (see chapter six) who was in the service of Qabacha left Uchch and joined Mangbarni.[37] This goes to prove that although Iltutmish had violated the time honoured international convention by murdering the Khwarazm envoy, political expediency certainly demanded such a course of action for the number of Mangbarni's supporters was soaring alarmingly. The presence of such a man in his court would not have augured well for the Sultan. Besides, Mangbarni appeared in India as a fugitive and not as a Prince of a large Central Asian Empire. To allow a pact with him and challenging the might of Chengiz Khan would have been unrealistic on the part of Iltutmish.

Minhaj has given a very brief and confusing account of Jalaluddin Mangbarni's stay in India and his negotiations with Iltutmish. He has not even mentioned about the arrival of the Khwarazmian envoy in Delhi. At one place, he writes that Iltutmish dispatched a force against Jalaluddin upon which he turned aside and proceeded towards Uchch and Multan.[38] On another place, he mentions that the menace of the Khwarazmshahis reached the limits of Lahore. Sultan Shamsuddin marched from Delhi towards Lahore along with his army forcing Khwarazm Shah to retreat towards Sind and Siwistan.[39] Peter Jackson has tried to resolve this confusion by suggesting that in fact two distinct campaigns were undertaken by the Sultan, both of which have been mentioned by Nasawi. The first relates to the army dispatched by Iltutmish to aid Qabacha against Mangbarni (though Minhaj reverses the order of events suggesting that Mangbarni attacked the heart of Qabacha's dominions following the advance of the Delhi forces). The

second took place when the vanguard of Khwarazm army had a brief encounter with the royal troops led by Iltutmish in person following which the two rivals exchanged amicable messages and retired.[40] To this second event we will return later.

After his return to the Salt Range, Jalaluddin married the daughter of Rai Kokar Sankin, the chief of Salt Range. The Rai also sent his son with an army to serve the Prince who gave the latter the title of Qutlugh Khan.[41] Mangbarni next turned his attention towards Qabacha. He dispatched an army against Qabacha, who was encamping near Uchch, under the command of Uzbek Pai. Qabacha was defeated and fled to Bhakkar and then to Multan. He sent a large sum of money to Jalaluddin Mangbarni to placate him. However the onset of the hot weather obliged Jalaluddin to withdraw to the Salt Range.[42] Nesawi writes that during this period, Mangbarni also received the submission of Qabacha's son, who had rebelled against his father at Lahore. The son was confirmed in possession of that city on the condition of an immediate cash payment and the promise of annual tribute.[43] On their way to summer quarters, the Khwarazmians laid siege to the fort of Pasraur in the vicinity of Sialkot and captured it. Mangbarni now received the information of the advance of Mongol armies against him (Dorbei's second expedition) and decided to return to Iran. Nesawi had placed the second encounter between the forces of Delhi Sultan and the Khwarazm Prince, the one in which Iltutmish himself had participated, after the Khwarazmian descent on Siwistan and the Indus delta. This is rather impossible. On the basis of Minhaj's statement that Iltutmish moved with his forces towards Lahore, Peter Jackson has suggested that it was at this juncture that Iltutmish had advanced in person against Prince Mangbarni. After a skirmish, Iltutmish offered Mangbarni an armistice and a marriage alliance and assured him that he has no intention of fighting a Muslim sovereign who was being pursued by the enemies of Islam. During the course of these negotiations two of Mangbarni's confidants

changed side and joined the service of Iltutmish as they had became weary of the hardships they had experienced while serving him.[44] Raverty has, however, discounted the possibility that Iltutmish had used force against Jalaluddin Mangbarni. I. H. Siddiqui places the episode of clash between Iltutmish and the vanguard of Khwarazm Prince immediately after Iltutmish's refusal to provide Mangbarni refuge in Delhi.[45] A. B. M Habibullah writes that the forces of two adversaries did move against each other after the rejection of Mangbarni's request by Iltutmish but it did not lead to actual fighting for Mangbarni thought it prudent to turn his attention towards Qabacha.[46]

Juwaini does not mention anything about the clash between Iltutmish and the forces of Mangbarni. According to his version, on learning of the arrival of the Mongols, Jalaluddin fell back on Sind. On his way as he passed by Multan, Mangbarni demanded tribute (na'l baha)[47] from Qabacha. Qabacha refused and readied himself to fight. But Mangbarni did not stay there long and moved towards Uchch but not finding the environment congenial there, he set fire to the town and proceeded to Siwistan. He then moved to Debal in the Indus Delta and captured it without any resistance. From Debal, the Khwarazm Prince sent an army under Khas Khan on a plundering raid to Nahrwala (Anhilvara, now Patan) in Gujarat.[48] While he was engaged in these operations, he came to know that the troops of his brother Ghiyasuddin, who had established himself in Iraq, desired his return and were looking forward to espouse his cause. Reports of the movement of Mongol troops were also reaching him. According to Nasawi, the Khwarazm Shah finally decided to depart from India when got the news that Iltutmish, Qabacha and a number of Hindu chiefs has joined hands to give war to him.[49] Under the circumstances Mangbarni had no other alternative but to fall back upon Ghazni via Makran. Finally, he left the Indian subcontinent for Iraq via Kirman.[50]

When Dorbai Doqshin reached India some time in 1224, Mangbarni had already left the country. After conquering Nandanah,[51] the Mongols under Dorbei appeared at the gates of the city of Multan. They led siege to the fort which continued for forty days. At this critical juncture, Qabacha opened the door of his treasury and provided numerous benefits to his people to win their goodwill.[52] Though he succeeded in defending the place, it greatly reduced his resources.[53] Thereafter, Dorbei went away in search of Jalaluddin Mangbarni.[54]

Though Mangbarni's arrival upset Iltutmish's plans of consolidation of his power on the western frontier, it facilitated his designs against Qabacha. As mentioned before the worst sufferer of the Mongol incursions and Mangbarni's adventure in India was Qabacha. It dealt severe blow to Qabacha's military prowess and made him vulnerable against a powerful adversary like Iltutmish. The Sultan marched against him in 1228 after Mangbarni's departure from India and the death of Chengiz Khan. He captured Lahore, Multan and Uchch in course of this campaign. These strategic places were undoubtedly crucial for the safety and security of the Sultanate. Sunil Kumar writes that through the 1220's Iltutmish consolidated the territories he had annexed from Yalduz and Qabacha, and transformed them into bastions that could resist the Mongols.[55] He appointed his senior most officers, Tajuddin Gajzlak Khan and Kabir Khan Ayaz at Uchch and Multan respectively. Another distinguished officer Nasiruddin Aiyitm was put in charge of Lahore. Under Gajzlak Khan's administration, Uchch continued to flourish and prosper. He worked for the safety of the peasant and the welfare of the people.[56] After the death of Gajzlak Khan, the administration passed into the hands of Saifuddin Aibak-i-Uchch, another prominent slave-officer. Even under Kabir Khan Ayaz, Multan is said to have flourished though he was removed after four years from the post for some unknown reasons.[57] Kabir Khan was later replaced by another senior slave-officer, Ikhtiyaruddin Qaraqash Khan Aetkin. Aiyitim also

administered Lahore very well and even accompanied Iltutmish during his against Uchch and Multan[58] (see chapter six). Subsequently, Lahore was placed under the charge of Prince Nasiruddin Mahmud and Prince Ruknuddin Firuz. This goes to prove that the Sultan attached great importance to these provinces so much so that the governorship of north-west were always given to people in whom the Sultan had the greatest trust: his sons and senior slaves.

The exit of Jalaluddin Mangbarni from Indian soil did not signify the end of Khwarazm dominion in India. Nasawi informs that Jalaluddin left Jahan Pahlawan Uzbek Pai to govern his Indian territories and Saifuddin Hasan Qarluq, entitled Wafa Malik, was entrusted with those parts of Ghazni and Ghur which had so far escaped the Mongol conquest.[59] Much of his territory was soon overrun by the Mongols. Nevertheless, till 636 AH/ 1238-39 AD, he maintained his hold in the area known as Binban[60] west of Indus and also seemed to have some control over Kirman and Ghazni.[61] Following his conquest of Uchch and Multan regions in 1228, Iltutmish turned his attention toward the Khwarazm officers. In 1229-30, an army was sent to eject Uzbek Pai who left India to join his master in Iraq while the Qarlugh and others submitted to the Delhi Sultan.[62] Peter Jackson on a basis of testimony offered by a coin opines that Binban was earlier under the control of Uzbek Pai where he was evidently succeeded by Hasan Qarlugh.[63] Nasawi describes the Delhi Sultan, on the eve of his attack on Uzbek Pai, as master of all the territory up to the neighbourhood of the gates of Kashmir, suggesting that his frontier (now) already stood on Jhelum.[64] Probably this was the period when Iltutmish conquered Kujah (a place generally mentioned in connection with Binban and Qarlugh Turks) and Nandanah and entrusted it to the charge of Ikhtiyaruddin Aetkin.[65] With these conquests, the Delhi Sultanate started sharing boundaries with the territories controlled by the Mongols. Iltutmish for all intents and purposes became their neighbour.

From the death of Chengiz Khan in 1227 to the accession of Uktae in 1229, the Mongols paid little attention to the Indian borderlands. In an assembly (quriltai) in Mongolia in 1229, Uktae was declared as Great Khan (qaghan/ qa'an) and thereafter campaigns were again launched where fresh troops were sent to Iraq, Khurasan and Afghanistan.[66] In course of these campaigns Hasan Qarlugh was compelled to submit and he consented to receive Mongol intendants (Shahnahs).[67] Consequent to these developments, Iltutmish undertook a campaign against Binban in 1236. It is not clear whether he moved against Hasan Qarlugh who had accepted the suzerainty of Mongols or against the Mongol forces itself. During this campaign, illness overpowered the Sultan who returned to Delhi almost as an invalid. On 20th of Shaban, 633 AH/ 30 April, 1236 AD, nineteen days after his arrival in the capital, Iltutmish left this world.[68] He ruled for twenty-six years. Describing the occasion, Isami writes that all the soldiers were weeping bitterly and the whole city shed tears. Parasol was draped in black, the diadem was besmeared with dust and all officers of state pulled off their caps from their heads in the state of sorrow. The mourning continued for ten days.[69] Thus, the era of the first Sultan of Delhi came to an end.

II

The arrival of the emissaries from Baghdad was another event when the foreign dignitaries landed on the Indian soil. Contrary to the coming of Prince Mangbarni to Hindustan and Chengiz Khan on Indian borderland, the coming of the envoys from Baghdad was an occasion which of both pleasure and prestige for the Sultanate of Delhi. The purpose of this visit was not to create trouble for the existence of Sultanate but to provide nourishment to the edifice

built up by Sultan Iltutmish and to strengthen its roots. The patent of authority brought by the envoys from the Court of the Caliph of Baghdad to Delhi bestowed de-jure authority to the Sultan which was imperative to raise one's prestige in the eyes of the religious class and sometimes even of ordinary Muslims. As discussed in chapter two, the investiture of the Caliph was mandatory, at least in theory, to create an independent Sultanate and to become a legal Sultan.

Muslim jurists and political thinkers assert that Khilafat is a divinely ordained institution. Two passages of the holy Quran are often quoted in support of this argument; each refers to a distinguished Prophet as the Khalifa (vicegerent) of God.[70] In early Islam, however, Khilafat was devised not as the vicegerency of God but rather as the vicegerency of the Prophet Muhammad. The spiritual function of the Prophet was believed to have ceased with him. The principal function of the Khalifa was therefore to establish justice and equality and to cause the masses to lead their life according to the tenets of Islam. Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406) asserted that religion is the root and prop of a state. Man has been placed in this world to perform duties imposed upon him in order to prepare for the next World. In order to know the divine law which would secure him happiness in this as well as the next world, he needs the guidance of the Prophet, or his vice-gerent, Khalifa, who takes the place of the Prophet. Whereas ordinary kingship is a human institution and the laws made by the king are based only upon reason and have reference only to the well-being of men on earth, the Khalifa guides men in accordance with the dictates of the religious law (Shariat) in order to lead them to the ultimate destiny (in the next world).[71] The Khalifa was, therefore, the temporal head of the Muslim community. Addressed by his subjects as 'Amir ul Muminin' (Commander of the Faithful) revered as 'Zillilah fil arz (Shadow of God on Earth), the Khalifa was the symbol of the unity of the Ummah and the supremacy of the

Shariat. After the death of Prophet in 632, Abu Bakr, Umar, Usman and Hazrat Ali were elevated to the status of Caliph one after the other. They were known as Khulafa-i-Rashidin (the right-guided Khalifas).[72]

After the death of Ali (661), the Khilafat was seized by Muawiyah. Muawiyah belonged to the tribe of Quraish and laid the foundation of the Umayyad dynasty which heralded the inception of the Khilafat-i-Muluki (Monarchical Khilafat), as distinguished from the Khilafat-i-Rashida of the first four Khalifas.[73] The Umayyads also established the dynastic rule and monarchial form of government in Islam. After the downfall of the Umayyads, the Abbasid dynasty established its control on the government in the year 749. The Abbasid era started on a grand note but the glory proved to be short-lived. They failed to produce a stable political structure. Soon it began to disintegrate and several independent principalities sprang up in different parts of the Empire. Ibn Khaldun has suggested that at the outset, the Caliphate was only a religious institution. Under the Umayyad, it took the character of a 'secular' monarchy and its original religious character became inextricably mixed up with the despotic rule of the king compelling obedience by the sword. As the power of the Abbasids declined, soon after the death of Harun al Rashid, the essential features of the Caliphate gradually disappeared, until there remained nothing but the name. Now that power had passed out of the hands of the Arabs altogether, the Caliphate might be said to have ceased to exist, though sovereigns of non-Arab origin continued to profess obedience to the Caliph out of a feeling of religious reverence. Apprehension from the Arabs led the Caliph to depend upon the Persians and later, to include Turks in their administration. Gradually they became increasingly dependent on the Turks. By the second half of the ninth century, the Khalifas became a mere puppet in the hands of the Turks who elevated and murdered them at will.

The Muslim jurists were perturbed by the continuous decline of the Caliphal authority and sought to restate the nature of the institution of Khilafat and postulated the idea of one supreme head of the entire Islamic World. Al Mawardi (991-1058) one of the earliest exponent of Sunni Islamic Political theory, proposed a concordat between the Khalifa and those who had established independent principalities within the Khalifa's domain. For the sake of the unity of Ummah, urged al Mawardi, the Khalifa should acknowledge the independence of these potentates. The potentates concerned, in turn, should recognize the paramountcy of the Khalifa and agree to govern according to the Shariat.[74] Thus both the supremacy of the Shariat and the fiction of Khalifa as the source of all authority were maintained. On his part the Khalifa was obliged to acknowledge the sovereignty of an individual in a specific domain by issuing a diploma of investiture to the person concerned... In later period, the patent of authority from the Caliph came to be considered essential for establishing the legitimacy of an independent ruler (see chapter 2). A title of honour from the Khalifa greatly enhanced the dignity and prestige of a ruler. By the turn of the twelfth century however the permission of the Khalifa to rule a certain province or state in the form of investiture dispatched by him along with a high sounding title had become a mere formality. In practice, the Caliphal authority was reduced to only a fiction and the recognition provided by him superficial. The Caliph had become too weak to assume an authoritative position or to act according to his own will.

None the less, the Caliphal investiture continued to be used by the Muslim monarchs to enhance their prestige in the eyes of the religious class and Muslims at large. Thomas Arnold has rightly suggested that 'Whatever shape the course of external events might take, the faith of the Sunni theologians and legists in the doctrines expounded in their textbook remained unshaken and even though the Caliph could not give an order outside his own palace, they still went on

teaching the faithful that he was the supreme head of the whole body of Muslims. Accordingly, a diploma of investiture sent by the Caliph, or a title of honour conferred by him, would satisfy the demands of the religious law and tranquillize the tender consciences of the subjects of an independent prince, though the ruler himself might remain entirely autonomous and be under no obligations of obedience to the puppet Caliph.[75] It is not surprising that during the Ghaznavid period, even a powerful and strong ruler like Mahmud thought it worthwhile to get his title as an independent Sultan confirmed by the Caliph of Baghdad. He nominated his son Muhammad to succeed him but his other son Mas'ud claimed the throne on the basis of having received the manshur (investiture) and khil'at (robe of honour and other such gifts) from the Khalifa of Baghdad.[76] The tradition and importance of acquiring Caliphal recognition was kept alive by the Ghorids as well. upon several occasions, Ghiyasuddin received rich dresses of honour from Caliphs Al- Mustazi (1171-80) and Al- Nasir (1180-1225).[77] In view of the awe and respect enjoyed by the Abbasid Khalifa among the Ulama and Muslims at large and in keeping with the tradition laid down by the Ghaznavids and the Ghorids, Iltutmish decided to apply for the investiture of the Caliph. Two of his contemporaries Tajuddin Yalduz of Ghazni[78] and Husamuddin Iwaz Khalji of Bengal had already received the Caliphal investiture; the latter had even proclaimed himself as the Nasir Amir al Muminin (Auxiliary of the Commander of the Faithful).[79] It may certainly have induced Iltutmish to seek the title and the investiture for himself.

While Iltutmish had sound reasons to covet the Caliphal diploma in order to buttress his de-facto status as the Sultan of Delhi, the Caliph had equally solid reasons to oblige him. The rise of the Fatimid-Ismaili[80] in the ninth century and the subsequent emergence of the Fatimid Ismaili Caliphate in Cairo (909) had posed a formidable challenge to the Abbasid authority.

While the Abbasids became increasingly dependent on the Turks, from the second half of the ninth century, the Arabs continued to maintain their control over the Fatimid Caliphate. The conflict between the Abbasids and the Fatimid gradually assumed the character of an Arab-Turcoman conflict within the complex of racial, religious and cultural influences.[81] This Arab-Turk conflict found a fertile ground in India.

In the second half of the ninth century, Shi'ism entered India as a political force and soon spread in the region of Multan and Mansura.[82] The Ismaili was instrumental in establishing the Shi'ite ideology in these regions. After the downfall of Ismaili political power in Multan and Mansura,[83] the Shi'is found a strong foothold in Thatta. The Sumras,[84] who adhered to the Ismaili doctrine, established their independent kingdom in Thatta in 1051 during the reign of Ghaznavid ruler Abdur Rashid Mas'ud.[85] The presence of Arab oriented Ismaili sect in India and their support to the Fatimids seems to have induced the Abbasid Caliph to establish his own representative in India in the form of the Sultan of Delhi. The Delhi Sultan was a Turk and was the upholder of the orthodox Sunni ideology. The triumph of Iltutmish over Malik Sinanuddin Chanisar, the Sumra ruler of Debal, around the same time may also have speeded up the process of the dispatch of the investiture by the Caliph to Delhi. This was perhaps a good opportunity for the Caliph to announce to the world that the victory of the deputy of the Caliph of Baghdad in India over the Shi'i Sumra leader was actually the actually the triumph of the Abbasid Caliph over his Fatimid counterpart.

There is also evidence that around this time many Turkish rulers of Central Asia also repudiated the Caliph's authority openly. For instance, the Khwarazm Shah was hostile to Caliph al Nasir (r.1180-1225).[86] The former were also the rivals of the Ghorids. Peter Jackson has suggested that just as Al Nasir endeavoured to incite the Ghorid Sultans against the Khwarazm

Shah in the same manner a decade or so later Iltutmish was perhaps visualized by the court at Baghdad as a possible espouser of the Caliph's cause on Khwarazm Shah's southern flank.[87] The Caliph, therefore, had good enough reasons to send the robe of honour to Iltutmish.

The attainment of Caliphal investiture required sending and receiving the emissaries between the Court of the Caliph and the concerned state. Exchange of delegations between the two provided the physical link between Muslim polities that were separated from each other owing to long distance. Blain H. Auer writes that the Caliphal investiture was also a means of building and sustaining pan-Islamic networks, as delegations were exchanged between courts.[88] It is difficult to ascertain as to who took the initiative in establishing contacts between Baghdad and Delhi. However, there are evidences that Iltutmish had sent Rashiduddin Abu Bikr on a mission to Misr (Egypt?) and Baghdad.[89] Emissaries from both the sides were exchanged. In 1220-21, al-Nasir sent Raziuddin Abul Faza'il al-Hasan b. Muhammad al Saghani (d.1152-53) as his ambassador to Delhi. He remained in India for long and returned to Baghdad in 1127 during the reign of al-Nasir's son al-Mustansir billah (r.1226-1242). Raziuddin Saghani was again sent back to India in 1229 and it was his second journey as the ambassador of Caliph that has been noted by Minhaj. Raziuddin Saghani, in fact, belonged to Badaun which Iltutmish had governed in the early stage of his career.[90] It is plausible that the Sultan and the ambassador were familiar with each other and the Badaun connection may have facilitated the conferment of the Caliph's investiture on the former.

The Caliphal investiture to Iltutmish had a Suhrawardi connection as well. We know that the founder of the Suhrawardi order Sheikh Shihabuddin Suhrawardi (d.1235) was the mentor and Shaikh ul Islam of Caliph al-Nasir. Iltutmish had cultivated cordial relations with Bahauddin Zakariya (d.1262), the Sheikh's chief representative in India (for more about Iltutmish's

association with Bahauddin Zakariya, see chapters eight and nine). At the time when ambassadors were being exchanged between the Courts of Delhi and Baghdad, patronizing the principal Khalifa of Shaikh Shihabuddin Suhrawardi was perhaps a conscious decision on the part of the Sultan. Bahauddin Zakariya's proximity with Iltutmish may have worked in favour of the Sultan and seems to have facilitated the bestowal of the Caliph's investiture on him.

The Baghdad emissary and his retinue carrying the Caliphal diploma and rich presents first reached Nagore in the month of Ramzan, 625 H/ 1228. They finally reached Delhi on 22nd of Rabi Awwal, 625 AH/ 1229 AD.[91] This delay was probably caused not only by the distance between Nagore and Delhi but also owing to the elaborate protocol that the ambassador and his party had to observe at every stage of their long and arduous journey. The emissaries brought for Iltutmish a robe of honour (Khilat) and a diploma (manshur) confirming his authority over the territories he ruled and had conquered. It seems that the Khalifa also bestowed the titles of Yamin-i-Khilafat Allah (Right hand of the Vicegerent of God) and Nasir Amir al Muminin (Helper of the Commander of the Faithful), as Minhaj has subsequently addressed the Sultan with these titles.[92] Awfi has addressed the Sultan as Khalifa- i-Amir ul-Muminin (Lieutenant of the Commander of the Faithful).[93]

The city of Delhi was beautifully decorated and there were much festivity and rejoicing. The Sultan carried out the norms of reverence and homage due to the Khalifa and gratefully put on the robes of honour coming from the Dar al Khilafat. Domes were erected in the city on this occasion.[94] The contemporary poet Taj Reza has referred to a royal banquet hosted by Sultan Iltutmish in honour of the visiting dignitaries from Baghdad.[95] As the Caliphal investiture 'could be shared or transmitted to subordinates or potential rivals in the form of a symbolic designation of authority,'[96] Iltutmish selected one dress of great value and dispatched it along with a red

canopy of state to his son Nasiruddin Mahmud, who was the governor of Lakhnauti at that time.[97] This was also perhaps necessary to impress upon the people of Bengal that it was only Iltutmish who has actually and in reality attained the Caliphal authority to rule over India and that a similar claim made by Husamuddin Iwaz Khalji earlier was fictitious. After returning from the Gwalior campaign, Iltutmish also started the practice of beating naubat (kettledrum) five times a day.[98] The bestowal of the Caliphal investiture was the last formality that Iltutmish was required to accomplish in order to become a legal sovereign. He was now a de-jure as well as de-facto sovereign of Delhi.

III

Needless to say that Iltutmish's attitude towards the foreign powers was based on political expediency and in keeping with the need of the hour. He acted against Jalaluddin Mangbarni and Chengiz Khan differently in different phases. Up till 1227-28, he followed the policy of dignified aloofness checking his rivals only when and where action had to be taken. From 1228 onwards, he followed the policy of active and aggressive involvement in the politics of the frontier provinces. He conquered practically all the frontier provinces and placed his own governors there. He was fully conscious of the political exigencies of the time and followed a realistic and far-sighted policy. Unlike the Rajputs, he neither ignored the developments in the North-West nor did he fail to respond to the changes that were taking place there. He adopted the strategies according to the expediency of the moment, tackled the problem and acted in the best interest of the Delhi Sultanate. While the coming of Mangbarni and Chengiz to India was a cause for concern, the arrival of the emissaries from Baghdad, on the contrary, was the moment of

rejoicing and celebration. Iltutmish was the first Sultan of Delhi who established diplomatic contacts with Baghdad. The credit for providing the Delhi Sultanate an exalted status among the comity of Muslim states goes to Iltutmish. At home the recognition of the Caliph certainly helped him enhance his own dignity and placate the jurists. The conferment of the Caliphal investiture on Iltutmish undoubtedly went a long way in perpetuating kingship in his own family.

NOTES:

[1] Ata Malik Juwaini, *Tarikh-i-Jahan Gusha,* brief translation in H. M. Elliot and John Dowson, *The History of India As Told By Its Own Historians* (Delhi: Low Price Publications, 2008; first published, 1867-77) *,* vol. 2, p. 395

[2] A. B. M. Habibullah, *The Foundation of Muslim Rule in India* (Allahabad: Central Publishing House, 1976; first published, 1945), p. 87

[3] Peter Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate: A Political and Military History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 37

[4] Agha Husain Hamadani, *The Frontier Policy of the Delhi Sultans* (New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, 1992), p. 06

[5] Ibid, p 06

[6] U. N. Day, *Some Aspects of Medieval Indian History* (Delhi: Low Price Publications, 2004: first published, 1971), p. 31

[7] Ibid, p. 32

[8] Minhaj-i-Siraj Juzjani, *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, translated into English by Major H. G. Raverty (Calcutta: The Asiatic Society, 1995; first published, 1881), vol. I, p. 285

[9] After the displacement of Yalduz from Ghazni, Alauddin had not able to hold the scepter for long. The rise of Chengiz Khan soon led to the downfall of the Khwarazm Empire. Khwarazm Shah got defeated at the gates of Balkh and had to run for his life towards the Caspian region where he ultimately died. See *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, vol. I, pp. 275-79. Mangbarni was with his father. When he returned back to Khwarazm along with the remains of his

father, he found his brother Arzalu Shah occupying the throne. As the two brothers were apprehensive of each other, Jalaluddin feared for his life and decided to leave Khwarazm for Ghazni, the fief which had earlier been allotted to him by his father. The departure of Jalaluddin Mangbarni for Ghazni and arrival of Chengiz Khan at Khwarazm took place almost simultaneously. Khwarazm was ravaged and all members of the ruling family present were killed. Chengiz Khan sent his troop in pursuance of Jalaluddin Mangbarni. See Tabaqat-*i-Nasiri,* vol. I, pp. 280-81 & pp. 286-87

[10] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 287; vol, II, p. 1019-1021. According to Minhaj, Fiku Nuin as the son-in-law of Chengiz Khan. John Andrew Boyle disagrees with this idea. He considered Fiku as simply a corruption of Qutuqu, i.e., Shigi Qutuqu. This noble man was not the son-in-law but the foster son (or brother) of Chengiz Khan. Boyle has referred to the Secret History where Qutuqu is said to have been discovered as a young child in the deserted encampment of the Tatars and was adopted by Chengiz's mother. He has also referred to the text of Rashiduddin who has narrated the same story but asserts that it was the wife of Chengiz Khan not his mother who had adopted Qutuqu . Moreover, Boyle also chided Raverty for misspelling the name on the ground consonant 'f' is foreign to the Mongol language. See J. A. Boyle, 'The Mongol Commanders in Afghanistan and India according to the Tabaqat-i-Nasiri of Juzjani,' *Islamic Studies* (Karachi), vol. 2, no. 2, June 1963, p. 236& p. 241

[11] Mir Khwand, *Rauzatus Safa*, extract translation in *The History of India As Told By Its Own Historians,* vol. 2, p. 556

[12] See *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 288-89

[13] Ighraks were the Khaljis, Turkmen and Ghori tribesmen under Saifuddin Aghrak.

[14] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 1021

[15] Rashiduddin, *Jami'ut Tawarikh*, extract translation in *The History of India As Told By Its Own Historians,* vol. 2, p. 551

[16] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, pp. 1022-23; for Chengiz's arrival at Talaqan in the year 618 AH/ 1221 AD, see *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 1008

[17] Ata Malik Juwaini, *Tarikh-i-Jahan Gusha,* as translated in *The History of India As Told By Its Own Historians,* vol. 2, p. 389

[18] It is written in *Rauzatus Safa* that Chengiz Khan was startled to see the intrepidity of Mangbarni and turning round to his son he paid homage to him in these words: Such a son and no other should be born to a father. See *The History of India As Told By Its Own Historians,* vol. 2, p. 558

[19] Raverty has translated his name as Turti while Elliot and Dowson calls him Turtai in the translation of Juwaini's work. See *The History of India As Told By Its Own Historians,* vol. 2, p. 391. J. A. Boyle has identified him with the Torbei Toqshin of Juwaini, i.e., Dorbei Doqshin, "Dorbei the Brutal" of the Dorbet tribe. See J. A. Boyle, op. cit. pp. 238-39

[20] Peter Jackson, 'Jalaluddin, the Mongols and the Khwarazmian Conquest of the Panjab and Sind,' *Iran,* vol. 28, 1990, p. 47

[21] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 1043 & p. 1073

[22] *The History of India As Told By Its Own Historians,* vol. 2, p. 390

[23] See Peter Jackson, 'Jalaluddin, the Mongols and the Khwarazmian Conquest of the Panjab and Sind,' op. cit. p. 48. In *Rauzatus Safa* the place is described as Kalinjar, situated on the bank of river Sind. For *Rauzatus Safa*, see *The History of India as Told by Its Own Historians,* vol. 2, p. 560

[24] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 1045-47 & p. 1081

[25] See *The History of India As Told By Its Own Historians,* vol. 2, p. 391

[26] Peter Jackson, 'Jalaluddin, the Mongols and the Khwarazmian Conquest of the Panjab and Sind,' p. 48

[27] Ibid.

[28] K. A. Nizami, *Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India during the Thirteenth Century* (New Delhi: Asia Publishing House, 1961), p. 331

[29] *The Foundation of Muslim Rule in India,* p. 172

[30] Peter Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate,* p. 104

[31] The place where Mangbarni entered India after crossing the Indus was identified by Raverty as Chul (uncultivated and desert tract) of Jaruk. It was called the Chul-i-Jalali. See *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 293. Agha Husain Hamadani writes that *Madan-i-Akbar-i-Ahmadi* is the only chronicle of medieval India which provides a clue to identifying this place. The place was recorded as Chaul Jalalia. Jalalia is a populous village situated one and a half miles from the eastern bank of the Indus in the tract called Chach. See Agha Husain Hamdani, op. cit, p. 51.

[32] Peter Jackson, 'Jalaluddin, the Mongols and the Khwarazmian Conquest of the Panjab and Sind,' p. 49

[33] *The History of India As Told By Its Own Historians,* vol. 2, p. 395

[34] Numerous troops joined them consisting of Turks, Ghoris, Tajiks, Khalj and Ghuzz and a great army was collected. Malik Khan of Herat also joined him. See *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 1016

[35] Anonymous, *Tarikh-i-Alfi*, as quoted in *The History of India As Told By Its Own Historians,* vol. 2, p. 563

[36] Ata Malik Juwaini, *Tarikh-i-Jahan Gusha,* as translated in *The History of India As Told By Its Own Historians,* vol. 2, p. 396

[37] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 200

[38] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 293

[39] Ibid., pp. 609-10

[40] 'Jalaluddin, the Mongols and the Khwarazmian Conquest of the Panjab and Sind,' p. 49

[41] *Tarikh-i-Jahan Gusha,* as translated in *The History of India As Told By Its Own Historians,* vol. 2, p. 396

[42] Ibid, p. 397

[43] 'Jalaluddin, the Mongols and the Khwarazmian Conquest of the Panjab and Sind,' pp. 49-50

[44] Ibid, p. 50

[45] Iqtidar Husain Siddiqui, *Composite Culture under the Sultanate of Delh*i (New Delhi: Primus Books, 2012), p. 121

[46] *The Foundation of Muslim Rule in India,* p. 79

[47] Na'l baha is the money given to foreign troops to abstain from plunder and devastation.

[48] *Tarikh-i-Jahan Gusha,* as translated in *The History of India As Told By Its Own Historians,* vol. 2, p. 398

[49] Peter Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate,* p. 33

[50] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 284;*Tarikh-i-Jahan Gusha,* as translated in *The History of India As Told By Its Own Historians,* vol. 2, p. 398

[51] Nandanah with an impregnable fort was the principal town of the territorial unit of Koh-i -Jud (the Salt Range)

[52] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 535-36. At this time, Qabacha is said to have pleaded to Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki, who was present in the city at that time, for moral support against the invaders, see Amir Hasan Sijzi, *Fawa'idul Fu'ad*, translated into English by Bruce B. Lawrence (New York: Paulist Press, 1992), p. 205

[53] Ferishta, however, is quite confused in this matter and writes that it was Prince Chagtae, son of Chengiz, who laid siege to Multan when Multan was actually ravaged by Dorbei Doqshin. For the opinion of Ferishta, refer to

Muhammad Qasim Hindu Shah Ferishta, *Tarikh-i Ferishta*, translated into English by John Briggs as *History of the Rise of Muhammadan Power in India* (Delhi: Low Price Publications, 2006; first published, 1829) vol. II, p. 244

[54] Minhaj informs that Dorbei Doqshin later left Chengiz Khan and joined Jalaluddin Mangbarni, and was subsequently converted to Islam. See *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 297

[55] Sunil Kumar, 'Balancing Autonomy with Service: Frontier Military Commanders and their Relations with the Delhi Sultans in the 13th and 14th centuries,' Presidential Address (Medieval History Section), *Punjab History Congress*, Patiala, 2007, p. 04

[56] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 724

[57] Ibid, p. 726

[58]*Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 612; *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 728

[59] 'Jalaluddin, the Mongols and the Khwarazmian Conquest of the Panjab and Sind,' p. 50; *Composite Culture under the Sultanate of Delh*i, p.125; Also *The Foundation of Muslim Rule in India,* p. 175

[60] Raverty pronounced the term as Banian. See *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 623. This was properly the name of a tract but also applied to its principal town Bannu. It was a fairly large tract extending from Furshur (modern Peshawar) upto the boundaries of the wilayat of Multan, comprising the region north-west of the river Indus. The correct name is Binban because of the fact that the immigrant from this region to the other parts of the Delhi Sultanate, and their descendents afterwards, perpetuated the memory of their association with it by adopting the surname Binbani (after the name of the place Binban), see I. H. Siddiqui, 'Politics and conditions in the territories under the Occupation of Central Asian Rulers in North-Western India (Pre-Mughal Period)' in I.H. Siddiqui and Nazir Ahmed (eds.) *Islamic Heritage in South Asian Subcontinent* (Jaipur: Publication Scheme, 2000), vol. II, p. 64

[61] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, pp. 1128-29. After the death of Iltutmish, Hasan Qarlugh became covetous of the possession of Uchch and the Punjab territory. He even moved to the gate of the city of Uchch from Banian with a large army. But his plan was failed by the efforts and gallantry of Saifuddin Aibak i Uchch, an able Shamsi officer. See *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 730

[62] Nasawi as quoted in 'Jalaluddin, the Mongols and the Khwarazmian Conquest of the Panjab and Sind,' p. 51; also see *Composite Culture under the Sultanate of Delh*i, p. 125. Habibullah writes that Uzbek Pai was expelled by the

combined exertions of Iltutmish and his own colleague Hasan Qarlugh. See *The Foundation of Muslim Rule in India,* p. 175

[63] 'Jalaluddin, the Mongols and the Khwarazmian Conquest of the Panjab and Sind,' p. 51

[64] Peter Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate,* p. 36

[65] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 750

[66] Ibid, pp. 1105-06 & p. 1109

[67] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 1119. It was probably the troops sent under Nuyin Mangutah to Ghazni which obliged Hasan Qarlugh to accept Mongol resident. See *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 1109-10. For brief sketch of Mangutah, see J. A. Boyle, op.cit., p. 242

[68] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 623 & p. 631

[69] Isami, *Futuh al Salatin*, translated into English by Agha Mahdi Husain (London: Asia Publishing House, 1977), vol. II, p. 245-46. Sheikh Jamaluddin of Hansi, a distinguish disciple of Shaikh Fariduddin Ganj-i-Shakar wrote two elegies on the death of the Sultan.

[70] They were Prophets Adam and David respectively. God is represented as announcing to the angels His intention to create Adam. "When thy Lord said to the angels, Verily I am about to place on the earth a successor (Khalifa), they said, Wilt thou place there one who will make mischief therein and shed blood?" (2:28). The following is the verse referring to David "O David, verily we have made thee a successor (Khalifa) in the land, then judge between men with the truth, and follow not thy desires, lest they cause thee to err from the path of God" (38:25). See Thomas W. Arnold, *The Caliphate* (London: Rouledge and Kegan Paul Ltd, 1965; first published, 1924), pp. 44-45

[71] *The Caliphate,* pp. 74-75

[72] Naimur Rahman Farooqi, *Mughal- Ottoman Relations* (Delhi: Idarah-i-Adabiyat-i-Delhi, 1989) p. 176

[73] Ibid, p. 177

[74] Ibid, p. 178

[75] *The Caliphate,* p. 76. I. H. Siddiqui writes that Minhaj quotes the distiches, composed by Maulana Zahiruddin Farabi, showing the respect in which the Caliph was held by Sunni Muslims. See I.H. Siddiqui, *Indo Persian Historiography up to the Thirteenth Century* (Delhi: Primus Books, 2010), p. 119. U. N. Day disagrees with this view. He suggests that when the Turks began to find their independent kingdoms, they associated the name of the Caliph more as the memory of their great past when the caliph depended on the support of the Turks than as a mark

of their recognition of the Caliph as their suzerain and source of power. See *Some Aspects of Medieval Indian History,* p. 07

[76] Abul Fazl al Baihaqi as quoted in R. P. Tripathi, *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration* (Allahabad: Central Book Depot, reprint. 1992) p. 10

[77] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, pp. 382-83

[78] *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration,* p. 18

[79] Ahmad Hasan Dani has postulated that Iwaz inscribed the Khalifa's name on his coins only for the sake of strengthening his independent position as so many other Muslim Kings had done before and after him. See A. H. Dani, 'Did Ghiyath al Din Iwad Khalji of Bengal receive investiture from the Khalifah?', *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society (JPHS)*3, 1955, pp. 105-17

[80] Ismaili movement grew out of schism among the Shi'ites over the question of the succession to Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.). A section of the Shi'is refused to accept Hazrat Musa Kazim (a.s.) as their seventh Imam and supported the cause of Ismail, the elder brother of Hazrat Musa Kazim.

[81] *Some Aspects of Medieval Indian History,* p. 06

[82] Shi'ism entered India during the Caliphate of Mu'atamid (872-892). In order to pacify the Persians, the Safarid leader Yakub bin Lays was assigned the region Sindh who occupied it in 871 AD and spread the faith in the region. After his death in 878, Sind got divided into independent principalities of Multan and Mansura. While the struggle to establish the Fatimid Caliphate in Egypt was going on, India was not neglected. In 883, a mission under the Fatimid Da'e al Haysam was sent to establish contact with Multan and Mansura. In 965, the Fatimid Dai's Jalan bin Shaybam founded his own dynasty to rule in Multan. In Mansura, another Arab dynasty Habbari Quarayshids established its rule. See *Some Aspects of Medieval Indian History,* pp. 13-14

[83] In 1010-11 AD, Mahmud of Ghazna destroyed the Arab-Ismaili state of Multan. The state of Mansura was also swept aside by him in 1027 AD during his return from the Somnath campaign. Ibid, p. 14

[84] The Sumras were local Hindu tribes who later accepted Islam and intermarried with the Arabs. They came under Ismaili influence in about 1034 and remained attached to the faith since then. Under the Ismaili influence, they began to consider themselves as Alids. *Some Aspects of Medieval Indian History,* p. 14

[85] Mir Muhammad M'asum, *Tarikh-i-M'asumi*, extract translation in *The History of India As Told By Its Own Historians,* vol. 1, pp. 215-16

[86] Hostilities arouse between Sultan Takish Khwarazm Shah (d. 1200) and the Abbasid Caliph on account of the ownership of some territories of Iraq. The Caliph al Nasir desired that Takish should let him have some share of the territories of Iraq overrun by Takish and hand over some portion of it to his Diwans. Takish refused and also defeated the army of Caliph's wazir Ibn ul Kassab when the latter entered Iraq. When Ibn ul Khatib came to Firuz Koh carrying dresses of honour for Sultan Ghiyasuddin Mahmud (d. 1203). Prior to this Ibn al-Rabbi has arrived bringing robes of honour for Ghiyasuddin from the Caliph. He declared in the khutbah on one Friday, "Ayyahu-l-Ghiyaas al- Mustaghas min ul Takish ut Takish ut taghi ul baghi" "Hail! Prop and defense against Takish the traitor and the rebel!" For reference, see *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, pp. 242-43

[87] Peter Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate,* p. 37

[88] Blain H. Auer, *Symbols of Authority in Medieval Islam* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2012), p. 116

[89] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 796. K. A. Nizami opines that the word 'misr' here does not indicate Egypt as translated by Raverty. He thinks that here Misr was used in its literal sense and stands for 'city' only. See *Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India during the Thirteenth Century,* p. 334

[90] Maulana Raziuddin Saghani hailed from Badaun. From there, he went to Kol and served as the deputy of the Mushrif. The disrespect shown to him by the Mushrif convinced the Maulana to avoid the company of ignorant and ill-mannered persons. He also taught the son of the chief magistrate of Kol. Then he decided to go on Hajj. When the Caliph came to know about the wide learning and expertise of the Maulana in *Hadith* (the Prophetic Traditions), he invited the Maulana to his court and requested him to teach all those present at the court something about the Traditions. Maulana Raziuddin was the compiler of the famous collection of the Prophetic Traditions *Mashariq ul Anwar*. It was taught in Indian madrasas during the medieval period. See Amir Hasan Sijzi, *Fawa'idul Fu'ad*, translated into English by Ziya ul Haqq Farooqi (New Delhi: D. K. Printworld (P) Ltd., 1992), pp. 229-30; translated into English by Bruce B. Lawrence, op. cit., pp. 200-203. We are indebted to Arab chroniclers for providing information about the earliest contact of the Caliph of Baghdad with the Sultan of India. Saghani is not named in the Indian sources. For more about Raziuddin Saghani , also refer to R. Baalbaki, 'al- Saghani,' Encyclopedia of Islam, Leiden: Brill, 1954-2004

[91] *Tabaqat-i-*Nasiri, vol. I, pp. 615-616

[92] *Tabaqat-i-*Nasiri, vol. I, p. 597, & p. 624

[93] Peter Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate,* p. 38

[94] Khwajah Nizamuddin Ahmed, *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, translated into English by Brajendra Nath De (Delhi: Low Price Publications, 1992, first publication, 1911), vol. I. p. 67; also see Yahya bin Ahmad Sarhindi, *Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi*, translated into English by Henry Beveridge (Delhi: Low Price Publications, 2010), p. 19

[95] Iqtidar Husain Siddiqui, 'Food Dishes and the Catering Profession in Pre-Mughal India,' *Islamic Culture*, vol. LIX no. 1, January 1985, p. 118. In his Qasida composed for the occasion, Taj Reza tells that a grand celebration was held in which everyone was entertained. He says: Shadi 'am ast dar shahr! yanga bahar shahr-yar/ khil'at khas Amir ul Mominin awarda and (There is rejoicing and festivity in the city, for they have brought a special robe from the Amir al muminin for the king), see ibid, p. 137 fn 02

[96] Blain H. Auer, op. cit, p. 115

[97] *Tabaqat-i-*Nasiri, vol. I, pp. 629-30

[98] *Tabaqat-i-*Nasiri, vol. I, pp. 620-21. Ghiyasuddin Muhammad ordered playing of naubat five times a day after receiving the robe of honour from the Caliph of Baghdad al Nasir. See *Tabaqat-i-*Nasiri, vol. I, p. 383

CHAPTER FIVE

Creation of an Administrative Structure: Iqta', Army, Capital, Currency, Apparatus for Governance and Judiciary

Iltutmish organized the Iqta's, the army and the currency- the three most important organs of the imperial structure of the Delhi Sultanate.[1]

K. A. Nizami

Administration is an important constituent and a natural follow-up of conquest of a territory. Since mere takeover of a certain region by a conquering army is no guarantee for sustaining the political power of the conqueror for a prolonged period, the creation of sound administrative set-up appropriate for that region help the conqueror maintain his hold over that territory. The success of Iltutmish as Sultan of Delhi and the remarkable achievements of his reign of twenty-six years did not depend simply on his political conquests; the organization of an administrative structure for the Sultanate had a fair share in it as well. This chapter deals with the efforts of Iltutmish to provide efficient administration to his Sultanate and the measures he adopted to guarantee the inflow of both men and money for the service of the Empire. How he organized the Iqta', raised an efficient central force, worked out a sound monetary system, created various administrative offices and administered justice to his subjects has also been discussed in this chapter.

I

The administrative set-up adopted by the successor states of the Abbasids especially the Turks was in fact modelled on the Sassanid (Persian) system of Government which had gradually carved its way into the Islamic polity. Islam in Arabia was a city-state but when in Arabs conquered Persia in the seventh century they came face to face a system well-organized in all branches of government. The conquerors gradually became enamoured with the system of government and culture of the vanquished. As the Abbasids were more inclined towards Persian and Khurasanis and never felt secure in Damascus, Caliph Mansur selected Baghdad, originally a Christian village, as his new capital. It was in Baghdad that the Arab influence faded and Persian tradition began to dominate. The majesty and splendor of the court, the court etiquette and the splendid cavalry, all part of Persian polity, became order of the day. The Divine Right Theory of Kingship, an essential feature of the Persian Monarchy, began to be espoused by the Arab political elite. Mansur also imitated by and large the procedure of the Byzantine and Sassanid chanceries.[2] The Abbasid traditions synthesized with Persian culture become deeply rooted throughout the Caliph’s dominions. This tradition was handed down to the Ghaznavids by their original overlord, the Samanids. The successor states also adopted certain features keeping in view the indigenous culture, the nature of the ruled and the geographical location of their territories. Consequently, different models of government evolved in Central Asia and Khurasan. The centralization of political authority and bureaucratization of the army, for instance, were essential features of the Sultanate polity under the Ghaznavid Sultans. All officers and soldiers were paid in cash; revenue assignment in lieu of the cash salary to army personnel or any other employee does not seem to have been a practice. Mahmud, the most dynamic of all Ghaznavid

sultans, also made compromise with the religious leadership over the division of power. The administration of justice and the interpretation of law became an exclusive province of the Ulama who were appointed as qazis and muftis by the state. The Sultan became the fountainhead of political power and could use his discretionary power in dealing with offenders against him or the state. Such cases were not generally referred to the qazi's court. The patronage extended by the Sultan to the men of learning and art turned the Ghaznavid court as the intellectual hub of the Muslim world. I. H. Siddiqui writes, "The association of scholars, poets, scientists, and artists with the Court became an attribute of sovereignty and it inspired succeeding generations of Sultans in Iran, Central Asia, and India."[3]

In the same vein, the Saljuqs left a tradition of their own with regard to the polity and the governing class. Though inspired by the political system of the Ghaznavid, Tughril, the founder of the Saljuq dynasty, had to respect the concept of equality among his tribesmen as they were originally nomads. Therefore, the Saljuq polity was guided by the principle of shared sovereignty and diffusion of authority among the princes and the tribal chiefs was a common feature. When the celebrated Wazir, Nizamul Mulk was entrusted with the office of Wizarat, he started assigning Iqta' to army men in lieu of cash allowances and the practice gradually became common.[4] In course of time, the Iqta' system became the dominant feature of the Saljuq Empire. After the fall of the Ghaznavid and the Saljuqs emerged the kingdoms of their respective vassals in Ghur and Khwarazm. The models of government left by their overlords served as example for the ruling elites of these dynasties. Since the Ghorid were associated with the Ghaznavid court, they acquired a higher level of urban culture of the Ghaznavid ruling class. Wherever they went, they attempted to produce a replica of the governance model of their former master. When they

came to India, they brought with them the Abbasid polity deeply soaked in Persian culture and Ghaznavid polity.

Muslim political thinkers also contributed to the evolution of a system of governance. Ghazzali (d.1111), for instance, thought of the state as a living organism and compared it to the human body. In working out the details of the analogy, he called the Sultan the heart of the system.[5] He has to guide the affairs of mankind and cleanse the world of anarchy. Very great was his responsibility for he will be questioned on the Day of Judgment regarding the condition of the people and about all the acts of justice and injustice committed by him. Great too was the reward of a righteous king for he will find place under the banner of Prophet on the Day of Reckoning.[6] Later writers also insisted that the righteous monarch was the 'vicegerent of God' and 'His shadow on the Earth'. Therefore, even though Shariat and 'Ijma (a preponderant concurrence of opinion on any point) were the limitations and check on the power of the monarch, by the time Islam reached India the monarchy had assumed a despotic and autocratic character with the Sultan presiding over a grand durbar, well-structured nobility and powerful army. The only real check upon him was his own nobility on whom he was dependent for administration.

In India the situation was no different. The Indians had even more exaggerated notions regarding the greatness of kings. According to Arthasastra, a monarch is the centre of the state, the ruler, protector and benefactor of the people. It would therefore be no exaggeration to suggest that by the time of the establishment of the Sultanate of Delhi, the Muslim and the Hindu opinion on kingship was practically unanimous in according the monarch great power and prestige. Change of rule from the Kshatriyas to the Turks was therefore a mere change of dynasty for the people of India. There is also little evidence of Indians being impelled by sectarian fanaticism or

religious zeal against the Turkish invaders as in their eyes the Turks were nothing more than another ethnic community settling in India. The Turks in the thirteenth century were not proselytizing missionaries as well.[7] Monarchy in the medieval period was by and large a 'secular' institution; it was inspired by Persian traditions and practices. It was therefore on the basis of justice and equity and not theological speculations or personal fads that the common man judged his ruler.[8]

After ascending the throne at Lahore, Aibak did not get much time to organize the administration busy as he remained in incessant military campaigns and expeditions against his fellow slave officers. The burden of creating an administrative structure for the infant Sultanate therefore fell upon Iltutmish's shoulders and early in his reign he was obliged to divert his attention towards the organization and the management of the government. The fulcrum of the structure that he gradually built stood on the pillars of 'Iqta as the major unit of administration, a well-equipped central army, well-defined currency, a splendid capital, an impartial judiciary, and efficient nobility. He laboured hard to rule in accordance of the principles of justice and equity, was generous and tolerant towards his non-Muslim subjects and left no stone unturned to satisfy the saints and the theologians.

II

Iqta', meaning a part or a portion, was the largest administrative unit of the state in the thirteenth century. The institution of Iqta' has had a long history. In earlier times, it represented a primitive form of feudalism and is generally believed to have existed in pre-Islamic Persia. The Sassanid period had in fact witnessed a strong antagonism between the protagonists of feudalism and bureaucratic centralization.[9] After Arab conquest of Persia, the Abbasid preferred the

Sassanid practice of bureaucratic centralization and discouraged feudal tendencies. After Arab victory, two categories of lands had emerged in Persia. First, those lands which were still in the possession of their former owners who were non-Muslims. They had to pay Kharaj (land tax). A slightly larger part of land consisted of those which had either been abandoned by their owners or belonged to the category of crown land of the Sassanid Empire as well as the land endowed to religious institutions and wastelands. From these lands, grants known as *qati'a* were given to Muslims and such grants were subject to Ushr (tithe).[10] With few exceptions, the area of qati'a was usually small sometimes only enough to support one family. In this sense, it differed from both the large grants of the Byzantine Empire and the large estates which had formerly existed in the Sassanid Empire. In course of time, qati'a grants also came to be known as Iqta'. Muslim political thinkers writing in the tenth century used the term Iqta' to mean a hereditary grant subject to 'Ushr whereas they designated a non-hereditary grant as tu'ma.[11] Both came out of land other than Kharaj land.

By the tenth century, Iqta' began to emerge in its new avatar. However, this new form of Iqta' was not a feudal grant. Feudal institutions arise owing to the need of protection and a contractual relationship was an essential characteristic of the former. Iqta' arises due to financial and administrative requirements. It was a delegated authority and excludes the element of contract. It can be surmised that the financial instability of the Abbasid state coupled with the decline in the Caliph's authority as well increase in the might of the various Turkish states led to severe resource crunch making it difficult for the state to even pay its civil and military officers. The social and economic exigencies of the ninth century thus led to the emergence of Iqta` as one of the main institutions of the state. The institutions which were completely transformed by the development of the Iqta' were the Daman and Qabala, on one hand, and the provincial

amirate on the other. Daman was the tax farming system which entailed annual auction of the right to collect the tax of a given area usually annually.[12] Qabala involved the payment of the tax burden of a locality in lump sum in a lunar year, assessed by the method known as muqata'a, by a local notable.[13] The endemic corruption among local and provincial officials worsened the situation further and proved to be a heavy burden on the state exchequer resulting in the wholesale extension of the farming of land revenue. The failure of even this desperate measure to ameliorate the situation forced the state to introduce the policy of assigning the taxes to military personnel instead of the tax farmers.

The assignments made to the military men were called Iqta'. It differed from old Iqta' in the sense that whereas the old Iqta' was assigned on Ushr land, the new one was given on Kharaj. The jurists distinguished between the two designating the former as Iqta'- i tamlik and latter Iqta'-i istighlal. The former was a grant of ownership given with the express purpose of extension of cultivation but the latter was a grant of usufruct bestowed for payment of remuneration for services.[14] Though blending of military commander, tax collector, tax farmer and the Muqta' in one person led to the emergence of independent principalities, in theory, the Iqta'-i istighlal was neither hereditary nor even granted for life. It was a delegated authority like all the other authorities in Islam and therefore beyond the pale of contract. This was the fundamental difference between Iqta' and the feudal institutions of Western Europe. Whereas contractual relationship between patron and client was an essential characteristic of European feudalism, the element of contract never became a feature of the Iqta'. During the Buwayid period, the Iqta'-i istighlal was assigned to someone else after the death of its holder and his children were given a pension. The assignee of an Iqta' had to perform military services and in

theory was subject to detailed regulation and inspection. They were not responsible for the payment of the soldiery who themselves received pay or an Iqta' from the state.

A provincial governor could distribute the area under his jurisdiction as Iqta but he would carry it out as an official of the state and not because the area formed part of his private domain. Legally, possession of an Iqta' did not give the beneficiary any judicial power over the Inhabitants.[15] In practice, however, it led to widespread repudiation of the monarch's authority by the military. A Muqta' often revolted against the ruler and carved out his own domain. But whenever the new Iqta' was entrusted to an individual, it was always handed over in a theoretical sense, that is he would govern the province as an official of the state and did not possess any judicial powers in the   Until the time of the Saljuqs the dominant type of Iqta' was the military Iqta' (in theory, a grant on the revenue of a particular area in lieu of military service and the beneficiary did not live on the land on which the draft was made. In practice, he very often lived in the area granted as iqta'). During the Saljuq period, the Iqta' system was carefully regularized. Ann Lambton has mentioned five main types of Iqta' during this period: i) grant of an Iqta' by the Sultan to members of his own family, ii) administrative Iqta' which was given in most cases to provincial governors. (In the western part of the Saljuq Empire it was normally called Iqta' but in eastern provinces, the term 'wilaya' was used). The governor was called Muqta'. iii) military Iqta', iv) Iqta's granted to civilian officials. Unlike the military Iqta', this type of Iqta' did not entail any explicit or implicit obligation to furnish the Sultan with troops. v) Iqta' granted to the Caliph. It was during this period that the military Iqta' were sometime combined with administrative Iqta'. It means that the governors were assigned Iqtas in their own area of jurisdiction. In such cases the Muqta' came to enjoy administrative as well as economic authority in his province which more often than not encouraged him act virtually independently of the

central government. Moreover, the social structure of the Saljuqs did not allow the Sultan to take punitive action against the recalcitrant governors and relatives which further undermined the efficacy of the Iqta system.

By the beginning of the twelfth century Iqta had become a regular feature of the administrative set up of the Muslim states. There is evidence that both military and administrative Iqtas were assigned by the Muslim monarchs to their subordinates. We know that Muhammad Ghori used to assign Iqtas' to his slave officers; many of them established independent principalities in their respective areas of jurisdiction areas after his death. Iltutmish followed this practice and assigned both administrative and military Iqtas to his own officers.

Iltutmish assigned primarily two types of Iqta's: large and small. Distinguishing between the two, W. H. Moreland writes that small Iqtas were by and large given to individual troopers who were bound to present themselves with horses and arms whenever they were called up for service or inspection.[16] The holders of these small Iqta's were permitted simply to realize revenue of some portion of land assigned to them as Iqta in lieu of cash salary. Such assignments did not carry any administrative duties or financial liabilities. Their actual position can be illustrated by an incident described by Barani. He writes that Sultan Balban was continuously informed about the 'Shamsi Iqtadars' who were part of the central army of Iltutmish and were allotted land in the Doab.[17] They were around two thousand in number. Most of these men had become old or unfit for service. Some had passed away but the rest had greased the palms of the clerks of the Diwan-i-arz (the army ministry) and had thus escaped the liability to serve the state. The sons had been allowed to succeed their fathers and lived like the proprietor of the land. They started claiming that the Iqta's were given to them as grants (in'am) and not as assignments.[18] This goes to prove that Iltutmish had assigned military Iqta's in the Doab region. He was the first

Sultan of Delhi to realize the economic potentialities of the Doab. By assigning land to military men in this region, he established his control over the fertile land. In all probability, it was the soldiers of the central army only who were given land in the Doab in lieu of their military services.

Larger Iqtas, according to Moreland, were held by men of position. Moreland however, is not sure whether these assignees, during the reign of Iltutmish, were liable merely for personal service as officers as was the vogue in the fourteenth century, or whether they were also required to maintain a body of troops also as was the norm in other Muslim states of the time as well as in Mughal India[19].Irfan Habib opines that there is hardly any evidence that the Muqti in the early Sultanate period was required to maintain a fixed number of troops or to send every year a particular amount to the state treasury albeit they were certainly obliged to furnish military assistance at the summons of the Sultan. He also suggests that it was Iltutmish who initiated the practice of transferring Muqtis from one Iqta` to another.[20] The chief executive of the Iqta` was however designated as Muqta' but there were also officers known as Iqtadar. The basic difference between Iqta'dar and the Muqta' was that the Iqtadars held smaller Iqta' while the Muqta was equivalent to the provincial governor and had to carry out multifarious administrative duties. Regarding the duties of the Muqta', Nizamul Mulk Tusi writes in *Siyasatnama* that 'they [the Muqta's] should know that their right over the subjects is not only to take the rightful amount of money or perquisite (mal-i- haqq) in a peaceful manner…the life, property and the family of the subject should be immune from any harm, the Muqta's have no right over them; if the subjects desire to make a direct appeal to the Sultan, the Muqta' should not prevent him. Each Muqta' who violate these laws should be dismissed and punished…..the Muqta's and Walis have so many superintendents over them as the king is superintendent over other Muqta's. After

three or four years, the Amils and the Muqta's should be transferred so that they may not be too strong.'[21]

The Muqta' had his own contingents, was accountable for the defense of his province and also responsible for the maintenance of law and order. He also had to present himself along with his troops on the orders of the Sultan whenever the need arises. Yalduz, Aibak and Iltutmish all have to present themselves with their troops at the call of Mu'izuddin Muhammad Ghori. Nasiruddin Aiyitim, the Muqta' of Lahore, was directed by Iltutmish to move towards Multan and lay siege to that territory which he hastily did.[22] Another Muqta', Tajuddin Gajzlak Khan of Tabarhindah was also ordered to accompany him on that expedition.[23] However, it is not clear whether each Muqta' had to maintain a minimum fixed number of troops or each reorganized his army according to his own resources. Generally, a Muqta' or provincial governor was not assigned a lower Iqta' than what he had previously held. Iltutmish's transfer of Kabir Khan from the Iqta' of Multan to that of Palwal can therefore be treated as an exception.[24] This was perhaps necessitated owing to some negligence on the part of the Muqta'. The Muqta' was also free to undertake expedition against the enemy of the state. The Muqta' of Ajmer Nasiruddin Aiyitim had, for instance, set out on an expedition against Bundi. [25] Though the Muqta' could undertake expedition, he was not allowed to keep the booty including cattle and other animals with him. It had to be sent to the Sultan. During the reign of Iltutmish, twenty percent of the booty was the share of the Sultan while the remaining eighty percent was distributed among the soldiery. It is reported that Nusratudiin Tayasa'i, the superintendent of Biyana and Sultankot, acquired such a vast booty during the Kalinjar campaign that only the Sultan's share was estimated to be around five lacs tankas.[26] The governor of Lakhnauti Saifudddin Aibak Uchch is also reported to have the elephants that he had captured during a campaign to the court. The Muqta's of Iltutmish also

set an example of good governance in their areas of jurisdiction. Minhaj praised Tajuddin Gajzlak Khan, the governor of Uchch, for his impartiality and benevolence towards all residents. He was just in all his dealings, worked for the security of the peasants and welfare of the people. He also created many charitable foundations and works of public utility.[27]

The Iqta`s were categorized on the basis of their strategic location and overall dimensions. The Iqta's of Lahore, Multan, Uchch, Biyana, Badaun, Awadh, Bihar and Lakhnauti fell in the category of major Iqta's. They were the backbone of the empire and only the royal princes or senior officers of Iltutmish were entrusted the responsibilities of these provinces. The Iqta's of Baran, Sunam, Kuhram, Sarsuti, Narnaul were regarded comparatively less important .A Muqta' was initially given charge of a secondary Iqta' before being transferred to a major one. Hasan Nizami writes that the governor had to deal with important affairs pertaining to religion and state.[28] Since his task was hard and demanding, he first was handed over the administration of a small province and after the successful completion of his term, he would get transferred to a more distinctive area. Competence as well as proximity to the Sultan played a vital role in the allotment of an Iqta' to a nobleman by the Sultan. Sometimes we also came across the term Wilayat. Definition of Wilayat is a subject of debate but the term was generally used for a large territory. The officer in charge of such territory was known as Wali. However, it is difficult to distinguish between a major Iqta' and a Wilayat in early thirteenth century and it can be safely surmised that both these terms were used in a synonymous sense at that time.

Iqta' was not the only unit of administration and agency for collection of revenue in the Sultanate of Delhi. We also get references to Khalsa land during the reign of Iltutmish. Moreland explained it in terms of reserved land namely land administered directly by the central revenue department for the benefit of the royal treasury.[29] The officer appointed for the administration of

this land was called Shahna (superintendent). There is evidence that a few major territories were reserved (mahrusa) as a part of Sultan's Khalisa and were consequently not granted as Iqta'. Gwalior after its capture was declared as reserved (mahrusa) territory and the Shahnagi (intendancy) of Gwalior was assigned to Nusratuddin Tayasa'i the governor of Biyana and Sultankot; he was directed to make Gwalior (the fortress) his residence.[30] Another province Tabarhindah was also converted into Khalisa land during the reign of Iltutmish. According to Minhaj, the superintendence of the Khalisa of Tabarhindah was assigned to Ikhtiyaruddin Qaraqash Khan Aetkin.[31] The status of reserved lands was however subject to change. It was liable to be placed in the category of land meant for assignment to officers and the assigned land could be designated as at the will of the Sultan. For instance, the province of Bihar which was an Iqta' during the period of Iltutmish was declared as a preserved city during the later period.[32] The designation of the officers in charge of Khalisa territory also seems to have been subject to change. For example, Gajzlak Khan, the in charge of the reserved territory of Tabarhindah, has at one place been described as the Malik of the preserved city of Tabarhindah but on another occasion Qaraqash Khan has been addressed as the Shahna of the same place.[33] In the same vein Minhaj has referred to the city of Uchch as mahrusa (reserved) when it was assigned to Tajuddin Gajzlak Khan in 1228.[34] But the same Minhaj writes that after the death of Gajzlak Khan, t Iltutmish assigned the Iqta' of Uchch along with the city and fortress of Uchch to Saifuddin Aibak.[35] Thus at one place the term mahrusa (reserved) and at another the word Iqta' has been used. In the case of Uchch, Peter Jackson opines that perhaps the fortified city itself did not form part of the Iqta' of Uchch and perhaps the Muqta' of Uchch did not wield any authority in the city of Uchch.[36]

Tribute from local chieftains was also an important source of income of the state during this period. Since the Sultanate was still in infancy during the reign of Iltutmish, it was practically impossible for the Sultan to establish his direct rule over all the conquered territories in India. The indigenous chieftains who accepted the suzerainty of the Sultan were therefore allowed to rule in their respective areas provided that they agreed to pay a fixed amount annually as tribute. It was indeed a wise decision as it increased the income of the state without any extra responsibility of administration. Dharma Svamin, the Tibetan monk who visited India during the last years of Iltutmish's reign (AD 1234-36) bears testimony to the existence of cordial relations between the Sultan Iltutmish and the chieftains of Bihar. According to him, the Turk soldiers posted in Bihar at strategic places did not interfere in the way of life of the local Hindus. They also held the chiefs in great esteem and that the Hindu and Buddhist land chiefs had acquiesced to the authority of the Sultan.[37] This policy continued to be applied even more than century after the demise of the Sultan. Firuz Shah Tughluq (r. 1351-88)- on the eve of his first expedition against the ruler of Bengal, Haji Ilyas- had for instance decreed that he would have the tribute and taxes collected from 'the class of zamindars comprising muqaddams, mafruzian, malikan and their like' (the land chiefs) in accordance with the state demand fixed by Sultan Shamsuddin Iltutmish.[38] Even in a Sanskrit inscription discovered in Rajasthan, which shed light on the political relations of the Sultan with the Chauhans of Ranthambhor, Iltutmish is spoken of in a friendly tone, which is an exception to say the least.

III

The army was an important organ of Iltutmish's administration and a major reason of his success in India. Nesawi would have us believe that Iltutmish had mustered a force of 1, 30,000 for his campaign against Jalauddin Mangbarni. This is undoubtedly an exaggerated and

unrealistic strength of the Sultan's army, yet the fact that Iltutmish was able to depute two armies against Uchch and Multan simultaneously (1228) speaks a lot about the military strength of Iltutmish and the preparedness of his army. That Fakhr-i-Mudabbir wrote a treatise on warfare *Adab ul Harb wa Shuja* and dedicated it to the Sultan also reflects Iltutmish's military acumen and his interest in the organization of the armed forces.

Isami writes that Iltutmish's army was so formidable that he could seize a whole world in a short time.[39] The Sultan's military triumphs seem to have enhanced his capacity to recruit a large army which in turn helped him gain more victories. The two thousand soldiers settled in the Doab and mentioned by Barani formed part of the centre of the army (qalb- i lashkar) of Iltutmish. They were called Iqtadar and sawar-i-qalb (cavalry of the centre). Each of them was required to maintain between 1 to 3 horses.[40] There is also evidence that the capital city has its own army whose organization and maintenance was the responsibility of the central government. Iltutmish also took great care of his troops and tried to keep the soldiers satisfied. When he came to know that Yalduz was planning to march against him after the Khwarazmian invasion of Ghazni, he immediately summoned his army chieftains and on the same day unsealed the treasury and disbursed the army their salary in cash.[41] The distribution of the salary in advance was a calculated move to keep the army in good humour and garner their whole hearted support in the impending battle with Yalduz.

Cavalry formed the backbone of the army of Iltutmish. As already mentioned in chapter three, Iltutmish aimed not only to raise an efficient cavalry but also to hamper the supply of quality horses to his adversaries. This policy seems to have had the desired result. The mighty Rana of Ajar, for instance, had a large army consisting of about 2 lacs foot soldiers but only 5000 cavalry during the reign of Nasiruddin Mahmud.[42] In the same vein, the Rae of Jajnagar could

muster an army consisting of only elephants and foot-soldiers against Tughril Tughan Khan, the Malik of Lakhnauti in 1244.[43] Along with cavalry, archery was also an important constituent armed forces of Iltutmish (also see chapter three). Iltutmish himself was reported to have been a past master in the art of archery.[44] Besides cavalry and archery, the foot-soldiers (infantry) also formed a large part of the Sultan's army. He is also reported to have advised his son that 'the safety of the highways and the defense of the dominions is not possible without the help and support of the horsemen and foot-soldiers who exhibited great intrepidity while shooing with arrows and hurling the mace.'[45] The cavalry and infantry constituted the centre and the two important wings of the army.[46] Elephants also formed a part of Iltutmish's army but they did not constitute the crux of the armed forces. They were cleverly used in military combats so as to take the maximum advantage in the battlefield. For instance, the litter of the elephant was used for shooting arrows in the battle against Yalduz.

According to Fakhr- i Mudabbir Aibak's army consisted of Turks, Ghurids, Khurasanis, Khaljis, and Hindustanis.[47] As the racial composition of Iltutmish's nobility was almost the same (see chapter six), it may not be wrong to presume that the army of Iltutmish was not different from that of Aibak in terms of racial composition. Isami's testimony that all of them (the army men), irrespective of class were profoundly attached to Iltutmish suggests that the Sultan recruited army personnel from all walks of life and from distinct and heterogeneous backgrounds.[48] This was also the period when the civil and military duties of the officers were not completely separated. We know that the expedition against Bhakkar was led by the Wazir, Nizam ul Mulk Junaidi. The Amir-i-Hajib, Izzuddin Salari is also reported to have participated in the Uchch campaign and fought side by side the Turkish officer Gajzlak Khan. The presence of

both Turk and Tajik officers in the same campaign attests to the heterogeneous character of the Sultan's army.

Some information regarding the military hardware as well as battle strategy used by the Sultan can be ascertained from the work of Hasan Nizami. Writing about Iltutmish's encounter with Nasiruddin Qabacha, the chronicler recounts the characteristic features of the troops of the Sultan. The army, he says, had swordsmen and shield holders and freely used spear and dagger. There were also great shooters who could throw javelins and shoot arrows with alacrity.[49] The soldiers were swift, firm-footed and steady and went out to the battlefield completely dressed in chain armours. Isami has mentioned that when Iltutmish made Delhi his capital, his troops raided the remotest part of the country.[50] To keep them agile, Iltutmish led them frequently to hunting expeditions. A very vivid description of the hunting expedition of Iltutmish is provided by Hasan Nizami.[51] Barani also writes that Iltutmish used to spend almost for four months in the winter season in hunting.[52] Needless to that the Sultan indulged in these adventurous activities in order to keep his troops physically fit and agile.

There was no dearth of men willing to join the royal army; in fact, many immigrants from Central Asia in the thirteenth century were men of sword and were readily absorbed in the army. There is also evidence that soldiers of a vanquished foe or even war captives were ready to join the victorious army voluntarily. For instance, after the defeat of Yalduz, many of his renowned warriors joined the army of Iltutmish.[53]

We know that Ariz-i-mumalik was the highest ranking officer of the army in the Delhi Sultanate. According to Imad ul Mulk Sharafuddin Abu Bikr was the Nazim- al Juyush (paymaster general of the army) of Iltutmish.[54] He was a man of noble lineage and a widely

respected man who could inspire awe among his subordinates by his mere presence, Barani writes that Imad ul Mulk, commonly known as Rawat-i-Arz, was from bandagan i Shamsi. He held the post of Ariz -i-shikar (officer in charge of the royal hunt) prior to his promotion as Ariz-i- mumalik.[55] He continued to hold this post during the reign of Iltutmish's successors and was a high official in Balban's administration as well.[56]

IV

Iltutmish was also called upon to build a capital for the Sultanate and chose Delhi as his first city. Isami writes that when Shamsuddin arrived at the fortress of Delhi, he found its environs pleasant and was mesmerized by its beauty.[57] Praising Delhi, Hasan Nizami writes that Delhi had a pleasant and healthy climate and its water and air was suitable for people belonging to different dispositions. The city had plenty of fountains and its air was saturated with the fragrance of gilly flower and jasmine.[58] These attributes of Delhi, as also the fact it was the place where his coronation had taken place, must have weighed heavily in favour of its selection as the capital of newly founded Turkish empire in North India (also see chapter two) Iltutmish not only liked the city but he continuously worked to make it a better place. He extended his patronage to a host of intellectuals, soldiers of fortune, Sufis, poets, men of letters, peasants, traders and many others who migrated from Central and west Asia to India due to the Mongol onslaughts on these regions. These people brought with them their own culture, customs, traditions and way of life. It enriched the city's culture and brought about a cultural renaissance.

The poets and historians who reached Delhi during this period have written about the court of Delhi as a place of refuge to innumerable hapless people fleeing for their lives in the

face of the Mongol onslaught. Minhaj who reached India in 1227 has written that this city [Delhi], through the number of grants and abundant munificence of that pious monarch [Iltutmish] became the retreat and resting place for the learned, the virtuous and the excellent from various parts of world.[59] Isami tells us that when Iltutmish made Delhi his capital, 'the city wore a bright look…Many a Saiyid of correct decent came over from Arabia. Many tradesman from the land of Khurasan, many painters from the country of China, many Ulama of the Bukhara stock and many a devotee and men of piety came from different regions. Craftsmen of every kind and every country as well as beauties from every race and city; many assayers, jewelers and pearl sellers, philosophers and physicians of the Greek school and learned men from every land- all gathered in that blessed city like moths that gather round the candle light. Delhi became the Ka'ba of the seven continents and the whole region became the home of Islam'[60] Isami's statement clearly indicates that people from different countries with distinct background and profession came and settled in Delhi during the reign of Iltutmish but this would not have been possible without the keen interest taken by the Sultan in making Delhi a political and cultural hub. These immigrants not only enriched India's ancient civilization by their talent but also contributed to the country's economic prosperity by their wealth.

Sadiduddin Muhammad Awfi who first settled in Uchch and then moved to Delhi after the downfall of Qabacha also alludes to the exodus of Muslims to India from the neighboring countries and the security and patronage provided by Iltutmish to them. He writes that 'the world and its inhabitants are safe and prosperous under the fostering care of the shadow of God, the sun of the rulers, refuge of the people of the world, Sultan- i salatin, Shamsudunya wad Din Iltutmish the helper of the Amir- al Mominin. People enjoy peace and view their future without apprehension, although most of the land of Islam has already been trampled under the hoofs of

the horse of tyranny.'[61] This was no mean achievement for Iltutmish that he had been able to instill confidence in the people and provided a prospect for better future to those who had seen such devastation and slaughter with their own eyes. It was this prospect for security and prosperity that induced Khwaja Shamsuddin Ajami, the Malik ut Tujjar (prince of merchants) of Ajam, Iraq, Khwarazm and Ghazni, to migrate to Delhi.[62] We also hear of the presence of a prominent Abyssinian merchant Ikhtiyar ul Miuk Abu Bikr in Delhi who was subsequently sent on a mission to Baghdad and Egypt by the Sultan.[63] There is also evidence of the presence of Chinese painters in Delhi at this time. In an excavation at Lal Kot from the Period II, labeled as the 'Early Sultanate', Chinese celadon and porcelain have been found.[64] It points to the establishment of trade and cultural relations between India, Central Asia, Egypt and even China during the early Sultanate Period. Moreover, the exchange of emissaries with the Caliph of Baghdad and Iltutmish's subsequent procurement of the investiture from the Khalifa undoubtedly raised the status of Delhi in the eyes of Muslim world.

Iltutmish also took care of the basic needs of the inhabitants of Delhi. There was shortage of water supply in Delhi and people had to go to the river Yamuna to fetch water. To solve this problem, Iltutmish constructed a massive tank in Delhi which became famous as Hauz- i Shamsi. Many other exquisite monuments were built and completed by the Sultan in the capital city prominent among them were his own mausoleum, the Quwwat-al Islam mosque and the Qutb Minar. (For details about all these monuments, see chapter eight). These monuments continue to serve as the visible symbols of the Sultan's authority and cultural attainments of his reign even today. Even his officers did not lag behind in constructional activities. Iltutmish's noble Izzuddin Bakhtiyar is reported to have constructed a mosque which was near a public bath.[65] I. H. Siddiqui has rightly suggested that the construction of new forts, palaces, mosques, with graceful

domes and colonies for the immigrants added to the majesty of the metropolis by not only transforming its skyline but also leading to socio- economic growth. The construction work in the city provided work to daily wage-earners who came from the countryside and settled in the suburbs, thus forming the class of an urban proletariat.[66] Siraji Khurasani, the poet who arrived in Delhi during the early period of Iltutmish's reign has composed many qasidas in praise of the Sultan and his son Nasiruddin Mahmud (d.1229). In one of the qasidas written in praise of the Prince, we find references to scientific instruments and mechanical devices such as astrolabe that found their way in the Sultanate of Delhi with the arrival of immigrants from Central Asia.[67] Needless to say that the capital city witnessed an all round development during the reign of Iltutmish.

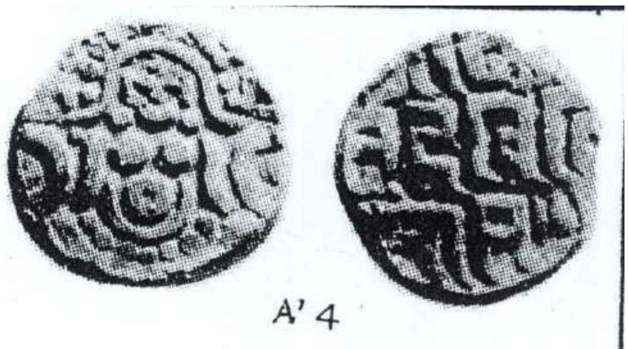
The reign of Iltutmish also saw the large scale settlement of Sufis in Delhi. Sufis of both the Chishti and the Suhrawardi sects came to Delhi during this period. Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki (d.1235), Qazi Hamiduddin Nagori (d.1274), Sheikh Jalaluddin Tabrizi (d.1244) were all present in Delhi during the period of Iltutmish (for more about Sufis, see chapter seven and Appendix D). These Sufis often assembled at a mosque or a public utility building such as Hauz-i Shamsi and took part in spiritual and religious discussion. Their presence and activities enhanced the status of Delhi as a great centre of Sufism and certainly added to its spiritual aura. Iltutmish left no stone unturned to make their stay in Delhi comfortable and personally requested many of them to settle in Delhi.

The grandeur and splendour that Delhi attained thanks to the efforts of Iltutmish can be measured by the fact that the city soon came to be addressed as Hazrat- i Delhi. Nearly all contemporary and near contemporary historians have used this epithet for the capital city. The magnificence and opulence of city continued to grow and the city continued to prosper even after

the demise of the Sultan. Ibn Battuta who visited Delhi during the fourteenth century described it as one of the greatest cities of the World.[68] Needless to say that the founder of the city's greatness and prosperity was none other than its first great sovereign Shamsuddin Iltutmish.

V

Growth and management of an empire is not possible without a well-structured and sound monetary system. The well being of a state and its people depends to a large extent on its economy for which a strong currency is indispensable. When the Turks established their hegemony in India after the battle of Tarain (1192), two types of coins, made of different metals, was legal tender in India. One was the local gold coin of small denomination, weighed probably 40 rati (72 grains; 1 rati = 1.8 grains)[69] with the figure of Lakshmi on one side and the Raja's name in Nagari script on the other. Second was the billon (an alloy of silver and copper) coin of 32 ratis, with the bull of Shiva on the obverse and the horseman inscribed on the reverse.[70] This was the most popular medium of exchange and was known as 'Delhiwals'. The Turks preferred to continue the system with minor changes necessitated by the occasion so much so that Muhammad Ghori retained the figure of Lakshmi and the Nagari characters on the earliest gold coin issued in India; the only changed introduced was the appearance of his own name on the coin (see fig.1). The same practice was observed in respect with the billon coins. On the billon coins, around the horseman appeared the words 'Sri Hammira', the Nagari equivalent of the Persian Amir, the title used by the Ghaznavid and Ghorid rulers. Nelson Wright talks about a 'transition stage' in the currency system where a coin bore the name of the conqueror (Shri Mahmad Sam) on the obverse and the conquered (Shri Prithvi Raja Dev) on the reverse.[71]



Obverse: Rude figure of Goddess Lakshmi

Reverse: Shri Mah/ Mad Vini/ Sam

Figure 1: Gold coin of Mu'izzuddin Muhammad Ghori (courtesy: Nelson Wright)



Obverse: Turk horseman to left at the charge, carrying mace; below horse 'ba-Gaur'; kalima on the margin

Reverse: Sultan al-Mu'azzam/ Shams al Dunya wal Din/ Abul Muzaffar Iltutmish / al Qutbi Burhan/ Amir ul Momnin

Figure 2: Gold coin of Sultan Shamsuddin Iltutmish (courtesy: Nelson Wright)

Regarding this type of coin, Edward Thomas writes that the issue could be a case of confession of numismatic fealty as the son of Rai Pithora who had been placed under the protection of the Sublime court was left in charge of Ajmer.[72]

It is noteworthy that the billon coins of Mu'izuddin, except those issued in Delhi and Narwar, seldom retained the indigenous standard weight of 32 ratis or 57.6 grains. Nelson Wright explains in terms of the low standard Ghaznavid coins issued in India which perhaps influenced Mu'izuddin currency.[73] The native script and the coin type were not disturbed primarily to maintain the existing equilibrium in the local currency system. Wholesale change in the system would have created economic and financial chaos in the country. The conquered territory was vast and the Indian masses could not decipher the Arabic script and ascertain the coin's value.[74] Though the mint's name does not appear on Muhammad Ghori's coins, it is possible to identify the localities where most of his coins were struck.

We do not have much information about the coins issued by Qutbuddin Aibak. A few little copper pieces of the rayed circle type, probably belonging to Kuraman, have been discovered. But it cannot be said with certainty that these were issued by Aibak. Similarly, none were probably struck by Aram Shah.

The reign of Iltutmish marks water shed in the numismatic history of the Delhi Sultanate. Coins of gold, silver, copper were issued during his reign. The system of currency introduced by him based on his silver Tankah and billon Jital remained in operation throughout the Sultanate period and continued even up to the Mughal times. His silver Tankah is also regarded as the predecessor of modern rupee. His greatest achievement lies in maintaining a uniform pattern of

currency and the scheme worked out was such that the main coin 'Tankah' was adjusted to the weight standard of the lower denomination coin (Jital) and the old ('purana') Dehliwal.

Two gold coins of Iltutmish are known. In weight, they follow the indigenous Indian standard of 40 ratis (72 grains). On one of them the name of the mint is inscribed as 'Gaur' on the obverse side (see fig. 2); now preserved in Kaiser Friedrich Museum, Berlin.[75] Edward Thomas wrongly read the name of the mint town as Nagore though he himself was not absolutely sure and did not rule out other possibilities.[76] On the obverse side was the figure of a Turkish horseman at a charge carrying a mace and on the reverse side the name of Sultan is inscribed. On the second gold coin the name of the mint is omitted but it is similar to the first one with certain differences (Now with American Numismatic Society). Both the coins are probably of Bengal origin. Regarding the figure of the Turkish horseman on the coin, Richard Eaton writes that neither Muhammad Bakhtiyar nor Ali Mardan or even Shamsuddin Iltutmish ever tried to seek legitimacy within the framework of Bengali Hindu culture or of establishing any sense of continuity with the defeated Sena Kingdom. Instead the new rulers aimed at communicating a message of brute force.[77] It seems to have been simply a continuation of the north Indian practice of putting the figure of a horseman on the coin like Chauhans had done earlier.

Iltutmish reign is however much more notable for the introduction of silver Tankah. A. B. M. Habibullah rightly remarks that the introduction of silver coinage by Iltutmish marks the commencement of Indo- Muslim monetary system and symbolizes in a way the beginning of the modernization of the state and its economic system.[78] Writing on the nature of Mughal state, Professor Athar Ali writes that the Mughal State was a quasi- modern state owing to its use of silver coinage and artillery. If we consider the issue of silver coins as the beginning of modernization, Iltutmish may be regarded as first founder of a modern state. The Sultan also

tried hard to maintain the standard weight of his coin which corresponded well with the gold and billon coins. Though Mahmud of Ghazna had the credit of issuing silver currency first of all, when he struck a bilingual silver dirham at Mahmudpur (Lahore) in 1027, it was Iltutmish who brought about an exclusively Indian silver currency. The Tankah of Iltutmish closely followed the Indian weight standard. It weighed 96 ratis which is equivalent to 172.8 grains (1 rati = 1.8 grains; 96 ratis = 96 x 1.8 = 172. 8 grains). The gold Tankah was also adjusted to this weight standard. The gold and silver Tankahs were of equal weight and the exchange rate between silver and gold was 10: 1.[79] It means that ten silver pieces would be exchanged for one gold tankah of equal weight.

On the obverse side of the silver Tankah the Arabic legend, including the Kalima[80] was inscribed and the title of the sovereign was embossed on the reverse. The shape and legend on the coin was similar to the Ghazni coins of Muhammad Ghori. Nelson Wright has categorized the silver Tankahs of Iltutmish into four groups. The first was the horseman Tankah which is very similar to the gold variety. Like the gold coins, it has the figure of horseman at a charge carrying a mace on the obverse (along with the Kalima) and on the reverse the title of the Sultan. Similar to the gold coins, the Sultan here is entitled al- Qutbi'. According to Edward Thomas the title al- Qutbi, denotes a freedman who was dynastic dependent of Qutbuddin Aibak.[81] Nelson Wright without discarding the opinion of Edward Thomas further suggests that it perhaps also meant that the sultan belonged to the Qutbi as opposed to the Mu'izzzi faction of nobles.[82] These horseman Tankahs were struck by Husamuddin Iwaz Khalji, the governor of Bengal, while acknowledging the sovereignty of Iltutmish as the Sultan of Delhi.[83] The coins of second group have on the obverse the name of Caliph al al-Nasir (d. 1225). The coins of third group have the



Obverse: La ilaha il Allah/ Muhammad Rasul Allah/ al Nasir al Din Allah/ Amir al Momnin

Reverse: al Sultan/ al Mu'azzam Shams al Dunya wa/ ddin Abul Muzaffar Iltutmish/ al Sultani Yamin Khalifa/ Allah Nasir Amir ul Mo/ mnin

Figure 3: The first appearance of the Caliph's name on a clearly dated (silver) coin of Iltutmish (courtesy: Nelson Wright)



Obverse: La ilaha il Allah/ Muhammad Rasul Allah

Reverse: fi ahd al Imam/ al Mustansir Amir/ al Momnin

Figure 4: Silver coin of Iltutmish with the kalima and Caliph's name (no mention of the Sultan) (courtesy: Nelson Wright)

name of Caliph al- Zahir who had succeeded al Nasir while the fourth category coins contain the name of Caliph al- Mustansir billah who assumed the Caliphate in 1227.

The first appearance of the Caliph's name on a clearly dated coin of Iltutmish was issued in 1225. It included the Kalima along with the name of the Caliph al- Nasir on the obverse and the name of Sultan Iltutmish with the title 'Yamin Khalifat Allah Nasir Amir ul Momnin' (Right Hand of the Commander of the Faithful) on the reverse (fig. 3). Although Iltutmish had not yet acquired the investiture at this time, the presence of the Caliph's name on his coins as early as 1225 indicates that Iltutmish had already acknowledged the suzerainty of the Caliph in order to apply for the Caliph's investiture. We also have a very unique coin which bears only the kalima (on the obverse) and the Caliph's name 'al- Mustansir' on the reverse (fig. 4). Many historians believe that Iltutmish's coins, bearing the Caliph's name, were inspired by the coins issued by Ghiyasuddin Iwaz Khalji of Bengal between 1219-1225. A. H. Dani, who has suggested that Iwaz had started including the name of the Caliph on his coins without actually receiving the investiture from the Commander of the Faithful, writes that 'it may also be concluded that the invoking of the name of the Khalifa on the coins of Iwaz led Iltutmish to copy likewise. And probably this invocation induced him to seek later on the actual recognition from the Khalifa.'[84] Though there is no clear evidence whether the invocation induced Iltutmish to ask for investiture, the possibility of the coins of Iwaz having inspired Iltutmish's later coins cannot be ruled out.

The coin bearing the name of Caliph al-Mustansir is undated but in all probability it was struck to commemorate the occasion of the arrival of the Caliphal investiture at Delhi in 1229. On another (undated) coin, the name of the Caliph al- Mustansir Billah has been inscribed and the formal acknowledgement of the sovereignty of the Caliph over the Sultanate had been declared by Iltutmish's title 'Nasir Amir ul Momnin (Assistant of the Commander of the



Obverse: La ilaha il Allah/ Muhammad Rasul Allah/ al Mustansir b-amr Allah/ Amir ul Mo/ mnin/

Reverse: Sultan al Mu'azzam/ Shams al Dunya Wal Din/ Abul Muzaffar Altamsh/ al Sultan Nasir Amir ul Momnin

Figure 5: Silver coin of Iltutmish (courtesy: Nelson Wright)

Faithful) (see fig. 5). A clearly dated coin with the name of Caliph al Mustansir Billah on the obverse and Sultan Iltutmish on the reverse belongs to 628/ 1230-31. We also have one silver coin where the name of both the Caliph al- Mustansir Billah and Sultan Iltutmish has been inscribed on the obverse. Here, the Sultan is given the title 'Al- Azam' (The Greatest) and 'Burhan Amir ul Momnin. On the reverse, the name of Daulat Shah bin Maudud has been inscribed along with high sounding namely 'Sultan Adil Shahanshah Bazil', 'Azd- Khalifat Allah' (Aider of the Caliph of God) and 'Zahir Amirul Momnin' (Assistant of the Commander of the Faithful). It is interesting to note that Daulat Shah (Balka Khalji), who seized Bengal after the death of Prince Naisruddin Mahmud, was declaring his own sovereignty and accepting the suzerainty of Iltutmish simultaneously. In all probability, this coin was struck during the period when Balka Khalji with the title of Daulat Shah, was acting as a vassal of Iltutmish who allowed him to retain a vast territory in Bengal. Perhaps the circulation of this coin irked the Sultan so much that he decided to lead a campaign against Daulat. Another silver coin with the following unique inscription has also been found: *'man kharaj Kannauj wa kafr*'; it has been translated by Nelson Wright as 'out of the capitation (kharaj = jizya) levied on Kannauj and infidels'[85]

Like the silver coin, the credit of introducing the Jital (coin of mixed metal, an alloy of silver and copper) as a specific coin also goes to Iltutmish. On the basis of the silver content of the billon coins, a Jital was valued at 1/48th of a Tankah.[86] Thus Jital was a coin of lower denomination. Though an imitation of the Dehliwal in type and general appearance, this coin had a much lower intrinsic value, i.e., a lower silver content. The Jital was in fact equivalent to 2 ratis of silver or 3.6 grains (3.6 x 48 = 172.8 grains = 1 silver Tankah). The combined value of the silver and copper content in a Jital equalled two ratis of silver and continued to be so during the

reign of his successors as well. According to Nelson Wright, a three Jital piece of Iltutmish,[87] (1/16th of a Tankah) can be considered the ancestor of the modern anna (pre 1965 system).

The billon coins of Iltutmish can also be divided into various categories or types: the first group was similar to the coins of Muhammad Ghori with bull on obverse and horseman on reverse and was also in keeping with the indigenous practice. Another type had Arabic legend on the obverse and horseman on the reverse. Another category had Arabic legend on the obverse and Nagari legend on the reverse while a few others have Arabic legend on both sides.

A large number of Jitals with Nagari inscription on both sides have been found: the Sultan's name in Nagari 'Suritan (Sultan) Sri Samasadin' and occasionally 'din' over the bull and 'Sri Hamira' round the horseman was inscribed. The date of issue of most of these coins is not known but we find some marks on them which in Nelson Wright's opinion can possibly be the year of issue or the symbol of the moneyer of the time. However, there are few coins on which the year in Vikram Samvat has been inscribed. On two coins of this type Samvat 1289 and 1290 (which corresponds to 1231-32 and 1233) is evident. Another set of two coins with Arabic legend on the obverse and Nagari legend on the reverse and having date in both Samvat and Hijri eras is also available (see fig. 6. Also see fig. 3 in chapter one). The date inscribed is Samvat 1283 which is equivalent to 1226 AD. Edward Thomas writes that these latter coins with date in both Hijri and Samvat eras were struck on the conquest of Ranthambhor and may be considered as a kind of numismatic fatah nama or announcement of victory.[88] On the aforementioned coins, the name of Sultan in Nagari script reads Lititimisi . Nelson Wright opines that there was an initial long I before the inscription on one of these coins and therefore it should read (I)lititimisi. He says that the legend on this coin indicates that the numismatic evidence is strongly in favour



Obverse: al sultan/ Iltutmish; (624 AH around the margin is inscribed in words)

Reverse: Shri Sulta(n)/ (I) Lititimi/ si sam(vat) 1283

Figure 6: Billon coin of Iltutmish with date in both hijri and samvat eras (courtesy: Nelson Wright)



Obverse: Asawari Sri Samasorala Deve

Reverse: Sri Chahada Dev

Figure 7: Billon coin of Iltutmish (courtesy: Nelson Wright)

of the long initial I as the first syllable of the Sultan's name. Simon Digby doubts the presence of an 'I' and suggests that the initial vowel and consonant have probably suffered metathesis in the vernacular pronunciation.[89] Digby further says that a careful reading of the legend reveal that there were two 'tes' (ت) in the name of Iltutmish and on this basis he concludes that the Sultan's name was Iltutmish and not Altamash.

On some billon coins of Iltutmish (bull and horseman type) we find 'Mustansiri Amir Li Muomina' in Nagari which obviously corresponds to Arabic 'Mustansir Amir ul Momnin' on the obverse and 'Sri Shalifa' on the reverse. These coins were probably struck on the eve of the arrival of investiture from the Caliph of Baghdad, al- Mustansir Billah. On some other coins of the same type, we find the inscription 'Sri Shalifa' on the obverse and 'Sri Hamira' on the reverse. The purpose of inscribing the name of the Caliph on the coins in Nagari script was to convey the message to the Indian masses that the Sultanate was an extension of the Caliphate and the Sultan was working as the Caliph's deputy. It was a ploy calculated to raise the status of the Sultan and bolster his claim to be the rightful monarch of the newly created Muslim state in India in the eyes of the people at large.

A billon coin (bull and horseman type) of a Hindu chieftain Raja Chahar Deva is also extant; the legend on the coin indicates that the Raja was a tributary of Iltutmish. The coin has on the obverse, the name of the Sultan 'Asawari Sri Samasorala Deve' round the bull and on the reverse, the name of the vassal 'Sri Chahada Dev'[90] (see fig. 7). The coin was subsequently superseded by another coin which had 'Sri Samasorala Deve' on the obverse and 'Sri Hamira' on the reverse of it. There are also coins which have the name of the Sultan in Arabic on the obverse and the horseman on the reverse. Nelson Wright suggests that they were probably issued for

circulation in the north but was later extended to more southerly Hindu provinces as well.[91] We also have a billon coin which has Arabic Legend on both the sides.

Iltutmish had also issued a large number of copper coins of different weights. On these coins, the Arabic legend has been embossed on both sides. But the Sultan's name on these coins has been written in a haphazard manner. We hardly find the full name of the Sultan on any of these coins. Either the first name or the title or last name or sometimes just 'Sultan' is inscribed. In a few other coins, the Sultan's name in Nagari in the same short form can be seen. These copper coins known as *fals* (plural *fulus* also called dang and weighed 40 ratis or 72 grains) were also called *adli* as a number of them contain the inscription 'adl' or 'adl- Sultan'. The exchange value of silver currency with copper in this period was 1: 80. It means 1 rati of silver would be worth 80 ratis or 144 grains of copper; in other words 1 silver coin was equivalent to 80 copper coins. There were also coins of smaller denominations weighing 48, 36, 24, 18 and 12 grains which were equivalent to 2/3, 1/2, 1/3, 1/4 and 1/6 of a copper *fals*.[92] We also find *adls* weighing as little as 8 to 10 grains which Nelson Wright believes had no fixed relation to the 40 rati or 72 grains *fulus*. They were exchanged in market at their face value.

There are evidences that northern India was heavily dependent on the remittance of gold and silver from Bengal in the thirteenth century. Arakan and East Bengal were the main source of supply of silver in Bengal. The remittances were irregular and were dependant on the subservience of the local governor to the Delhi Sultan.[93] Iltutmish therefore never allowed a warring or powerful governor in Bengal and moved against them swiftly whenever they exhibited signs of revolt. With control over Bengal, flow of silver from East Bengal would not be a problem.

Iltutmish also started the practice of inscribing the mint name on the coins. On one of his rare gold coin, Gaur is mentioned. On one of the silver Tankah, Delhi is clearly inscribed with the date 628 AH/ 1230-31 AD. Another silver coin bears a vague name ‘Bilad ul Hind’ (territory of Hindustan). The name of Delhi appears on the billon coins as well. A clearly dated billon coin on which we find Delhi as mint name is dated 624 AH/ 1226-27 AD. On the same coin the date is also inscribed in Vikram Samvat era (1283). This is also the earliest dated coin on which the capital city is mentioned. On an anonymous coin of the period of Iltutmish, Lahore appears as the mint.[94]

It goes without saying that Iltutmish’s contribution to the development of the monetary system of the Delhi Sultanate is second to none. He followed the Indian weight standard in his currency and established the silver Tankah and billon Jital on a firm footing. The adoption of the indigenous 32 rati weight standard in the currency scheme made the monetary system acceptable and permanent.[95] He issued copper coins keeping in view the needs of all and sundry so much so that even coins weighing 8-10 grains (*adls*) were released into the market. G. S. Khwaja has rightly observed that ‘Iltutmish was a very intelligent moneyer whose policies of denomination, gradation, face value of the coin on the basis of its metal cost, ratio of coins of different metals among each other and subdivision of the coins on the basis of weight were the things which significantly influenced the history of numismatics in medieval India.’ [96] The silver Tankah of Iltutmish which became the predecessor of the silver rupiah of the time of Sher Shah and the Mughals remained the standard coin of India for almost 600 years. This can also be seen as the emergence of modern economy in India in a way. In the same vein, Iltutmish’s practice of inscribing the name of the mint town on the coins became a model for subsequent rulers and it

continued to be the standard norm for more than six centuries. Needless to say that Iltutmish was certainly a pioneer in initiating a new and advanced monetary system in India.

VI

A sound administrative apparatus is imperative for the proper management and control of any state. Functioning of the government is therefore impossible without a sound administration. The Sultanate of Delhi was not an exception to this rule. Although the Caliph was the de-jure head of a Muslim state in theory but in practice the monarch was the head of the administration. He was the supreme executive and judicial authority of the Sultanate and had to formulate a theory of kingship in accordance with law and acceptable to his subjects at large. Iltutmish laboured hard to accomplish precisely this task. He was not interested in converting India, a '*darul harb*' (dwelling of the enemies) into '*darul Islam*' (land of peace or Muslims). We know, for instance, that when a group of theologian requested him to give the Hindus the choice of 'Islam or death', the Wazir, on the directions of the Sultan, gave an evasive reply (see chapter seven). There is also evidence that in the transaction of the business of the empire, Iltutmish followed the dictates of his own mind and was by and large free from the influence of the theologians. Isami calls him a just and benevolent monarch.[97]

Iltutmish's theory of kingship can be ascertained from the royal mandate issued by Sultan to his son prince Nasiruddin Mahmud on the occasion of his appointment as the governor of Lahore. Certain guidelines had been provided to the Prince as to what should be his obligations. It gives a sneak preview into Iltutmish's philosophy of governance. The Prince was directed to follow the Shariat and respect the Saiyids who belonged to the family of the Prophet. He should

be kind and generous to his servants and attendants according to their rank and position. He also asked Nasiruddin to win the heart of all men, high and low and seek their love and support for the great empire. He should pay special attention to the organization and discipline of the army particularly horseman and foot-soldiers for the safety of the highways and defense of the empire. He was required to look after the education of the students and provide the men of letters all opportunities to live happily for their writings were a great favour to mankind.[98]

Perhaps the most important instruction to the Prince was to work for the welfare of the peasants and other people of lower order. Nasiruddin was directed to protect the peasants and people of lower ranks from being bitten by the canine teeth of calamities and disasters and to make their life happy and cheerful.[99] Administration of justice and equity were accorded precedence over the rest. From the foregoing it can be seen that Iltutmish was of a generous and benevolent monarch who was committed to the welfare of the people and of his own faith as well. Shariat was important in his eyes but he did not allow its custodians namely the Ulama to commit atrocities on his Hindu subjects. People of all rank and sections were treated equally. The aspirations and expectations of nobles, men of letters as well as men belonging to the lower strata had to be satisfied and efforts should be made to keep than safe from calamities, both natural and manmade. Learning and education were assigned a higher pedestal.

From the account of Hasan Nizami it seems that Iltutmish was educated and knew how to read and write. At one place, the chronicler writes that thanks to the king's [Iltutmish] disturbance quelling sword and his musk scattering pen, the world became an object of envy for paradise.[100] At another place, he has referred to the Sultan as the powerful holder of pen.[101] This view has been collaborated by Isami. He writes that after returning from the Rathambhor campaign, Iltutmish busied himself into the work of administration of the country and

organization of the army. He ruled according to the principles of justice and equity since he was aware of the root and branches of the Islamic law.[102] This indicates that Iltutmish was not illiterate and could read and write. He was just to the afflicted and harsh to the violators of law and disturbers of peace. He showed no mercy to the Mewatis who resided in outskirts of Delhi and were involved in mischief and anti state activities.[103] Awfi writes that during his reign, the countryside was infested with dacoits who operated on highways which obstructed not only internal trade but transmission of information between the centre and the provinces. The Sultan and his Wazir took effective measures for their suppression. The roads were rendered safe and the merchants could now travel with gold and valuable merchandise without fear.[104]

The Sultan possessed judicial powers as well. He was the supreme head in all civil and judicial matters and functioned as the highest court of appeal. He believed that dispensation of justice was a prime responsibility of a monarch. In the royal mandate issued to Prince Nasiruddin Mahmud, it was clearly stated that when the pillars of kingship are strengthened by means of fair play and uninterrupted administration of justice, then the tree of justice and equity will become fresh and fruit-bearing during the auspicious regime of the king.[105] Minhaj and Isami both praised Iltutmish for his sense of justice and generosity. Ibn Battuta likewise informs us that among the memorable deeds of Iltutmish was his act of redressing grievances and rendering justice to the oppressed. He asked the oppressed to wear dyed garment so that as soon as the Sultan marched on horseback he could recognized the aggrieved one and deliver justice to him. Ibn Battuta further writes that for swift redress of the victims' grievances, the Sultan placed two marble lions on two towers at the gate of his palace and tied two bells in iron chains around their neck. The distressed person would shake the bell in the night and the Sultan would immediately administer justice.[106] He dealt with his own corrupt officers sternly. We know that Muhammad

Gardezi, the Qazi of Bayana was dismissed from state service on account of corruption. When he tried to get back his position by deceit on the instigation of Jamal Parsa (Jamal the Pious), another cheat who pretended to be a pious man, both of them were punished severely.[107] They were made to ride on scabby camels and paraded in the bazaars of Delhi with an announcement that any one guilty of deceit and misinterpretation would meet the same fate.[108]

Next to the Sultan, the most important officer was Wazir, who functioned as the head of the Diwan-i-Wizarat. The title of Wazir in the early Sultanate period was Nizam ul Mulk (administrator of the realm). Ferishta writes that the title of Nizam ul Mulk was used for the Wazir of Iltutmish for the first time in Hindustan and was generally adopted afterwards.[109] Two eminent nobles headed the Diwan-i Wizarat during the reign of Iltutmish. Nizam ul Mulk Junaidi performed the duties of the Wazir for a long time during the reign of Iltutmish. However, during the last years of the Sultan's reign, Fakr ul Mulk Isami, who had served as the Abbasid Wazir for thirty years, came to India and was appointed Wazir.[110] He was an extremely learned and talented man and fully co-operated with the Sultan in carrying out the duties of his office. R.P. Tripathi writes that this appointment shows that Iltutmish gave considerable weight to administrative experience and did not necessarily insist on military ability and physical fitness.[111] Apart from other duties, the Wazir primarily looked after the department of finance. The Wazir was assisted by two senior officers: the Mushrif-i-mumalik and Mustaufi-i- mumalik who served as the accountant genera and auditor general of the Empire respectively. The Mushrif's duty was to enter the revenue received from the provinces and various departments in the account books and the Mustaufi audited them.[112] The Wazir's department also collected the land revenue from the Khalisa land and the tribute from the vassals. The major routine work of his department was to audit the account of the provincial governors and realize the surplus revenue from them. A

host of Amil, Karkun and Mutassif comprised his fiscal and clerical staff. In the early Sultanate period when there was no clear cut distinction between the civil and military officers, the Wazir also performed military duties and accompanied the Sultan in various expeditions. The presence of Junaidi in the Uchch campaign bears testimony to this fact. Tajul Mulk Mahmud, the chief Dabir, was the Mushrif-i- mumalik of Iltutmish.[113] No chronicler has however mentioned the name of the chief Mustaufi during the reign of Iltutmish.

The next department at the central level was Diwan-i-arz whose head was known as Ariz-i-mumalik. He was the pay master general of the army. He maintained the descriptive rolls of the horses and men and also looked after the recruitment of soldiers. As already mentioned, Awfi has informed us that Imad ul Mulk Sharafuddin Abu Bikr was the Nazim al Juyush (paymaster general of the army) of Iltutmish. Barani also writes that Imad ul Mulk Rawat Arz held the rank of Ariz-i-mumalik during the reign of Iltutmish but he has not mentioned the full name of the officer.

The Diwan-i-insha dealt with the royal correspondence. The head of this department was called Sadr ul mulk or Dabir i mumalik (Secretary of the State). He was in charge of the correspondence between the central and local governments. He conveyed the wishes of the Sultan to the provincial and local officers and put forward their petitions before the Sultan. He had a large staff of secretaries called Dabir. The Dabir -i-khas was the private secretary of the Sultan. He looked after the Sultan’s correspondence and also drafted the Fathnamas. Taj ul Mulk Mahmud was the chief secretary of the Sultan. Minhaj writes that when Iltutmish decided to declare Raziya as his heir apparent, he commanded Taj ul Mulk to write out a decree for the same.[114]

Diwan-i Qaza was another important department at the central level and was headed by Qazi- al quzat or Qazi- i mumalik (chief justice of the empire). The chief judge administered justice, recruited and posted judges and other judicial staff in the provinces and looked after the management of the judicial institutions. He also looked after the ecclesiastical affairs of the Sultanate. As officer in charge of the ecclesiastical affairs, he was known as Sadr-i al sudur or Sadar- i jahan. He also controlled the educational establishment, led the Friday prayer and appointed Khatib (preacher) and Imam (prayer-leader) of the mosques.[115] Awfi has mentioned at one place that Nizamul Mulk Junaidi was not only the Wazir but also held the additional charge of the department of Sadr.[116] Sometimes the Sadr was given the additional charge of Sheikh- al Islam. Sheikh- al Islam was however an honorific post and could be given to more than one person at a time. He was not required to be present at the court all the time. It was generally given to a prominent theologian or a distinguished Sufi in recognition of his services or support to the Sultan. Iltutmish had for instance appointed Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya as Sheikh-al Islam after the Uchch campaign. Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki had however refused to accept this post.

Another important officer was Barid-i mumalik. He controlled all the news reporters and intelligence agents employed by the state.[117] He collected reports from various part of the kingdom through his agents and placed them before the ruler. It is not known whether or not the Barid-i mumalik had a full-fledged network of spies under during the period of Iltutmish. But there is no doubt that spies were active and could be found in all parts of the empire during his reign. It was a news reporter who had informed Iltutmish regarding Yalduz’s intention to march against the Sultanate after he had been ousted from Ghazni by the Khwarazmians and taken

shelter in Lahore.[118] This information at the right moment certainly helped Iltutmish to take prompt action against the aggressor.

We also find references in contemporary historical literature regarding some other departments or positions. There were for example officers known as treasurers (khazin) who worked under the Wazir. During the entire period of Iltutmish, Hindu Khan held the post of the Treasurer of the Sultanate.[119] There are also references to the office of Shahna (Superintendent) of Zarrad khana (armoury) and Shahna of rivers and vessels. Malik Badruddin Sunkar Rumi and Malik Tajuddin Sanjar Kuret Khan held these posts respectively during the reign of Iltutmish.[120] Iltutmish is credited to have created the department Amir- i Kohi.[121] Malik ul Umarah was said to have held the post of Amir- i koh.[122] This department looked after the improvement of agriculture, reclaimed waste land and worked for the welfare of the peasants. The officer in charge also supervised the construction of canals, distribution of water and clearing of jungles.

A number of officers were attached to the royal household who were quite influential and had the potential of controlling the government in the event of weak ruler on the throne. One such important post was that of Amir- i hajib. Malik Izzuddin Muhammad Salari who was present during the Uchch campaign was the Amir-i hajib of the Sultan.[123] Also style as Barbak, Amir- i hajib was the master of court ceremonies. He looked after the court etiquettes. All petitions were presented to the Sultan through the Amir- i hajib or his subordinates. They were mostly trained officers and were many a times entrusted the command of military expeditions.

The chief officer associated with the royal household was however Wakil- i dar. He controlled the entire household and disbursed the allowances and salaries to the Sultan's personal staff. All royal orders relating to the household were communicated through him. According to *Siyasatnama,* the royal kitchen, the Sharabkhana, the royal stable and even the royal children

was under his care.[124] The post gained added significance after the appointment of Imaduddin Raihan, an Indian Muslim noble, on it during the period of Nasiruddin Mahmud. But the allotment of Malik Qutbuddin Ghori, one of the most prominent and capable officer of his time, to the post of Wakil- i dar clearly indicates that the post had great relevance even during the time of Iltutmish.

The Sultan also had a number of bodyguards who were known as Jandars. They accompanied the Sultan all the time and looked after his security. They were commanded by a trustworthy Amir called Sar- i Jandar. It seems that this officer was expected to be cruel and a person capable of shedding blood for when Iltutmish offered this post to Malik Saifuddin Aibak, he politely refused and said that he was incapable of shedding blood and torturing his fellow Muslims that required from the holder of the post.[125] This post was also believed to have been the stepping stone for the promotion of a slave and paved the way for his becoming the Muqta' of a province. A number of slave-offices of Iltutmish occupied this position before being promoted to the rank of the governor. We know that persons like Nasiruddin Aiytim, Saifuddin Aibak Uchch and Ikhtiyaruddin Aetkin etc. held this post during the reign of Iltutmish.[126]

Another office which seems to have been as important as Sar-i jandar, at least during the early Sultanate period, was that of Amir-i akhur (lord of the royal stables). Holder of this assignment was many a times promoted as Muqti' of an important province; Tajuddin Sanjar Gajzlak Khan, Izzuddin Tughril Tughan Khan and Qamruddin Qiran Tamur Khan can be included in this category.[127] Other minor dignitaries at the centre were Shahna–i pilan (Superintendent of elephants) and Amir-i shikar (in charge of the royal hunt).

There are also references to a number of minor officials associated with the royal household. Chief among them were Chashnigir (comptroller of the royal kitchen), Saqi-i khas

(personal cup-bearer of the Sultan), Sar dawatdar (chief keeper of the Sultan's writing case), Tashtdar (ewer bearer), Yuzban (keeper of the hunting leopards), Sar chatardar (head of the state canopy bearers), Sharabdar (officer who looked after the royal drinks), Bahladar (one who carries hunting gloves in one's belt), Jamahdar ((keeper of the royal wardrobe). The incumbents by and large used these assignments for administrative training and jumping board for promotion to offices of real responsibility. During the reign of Iltutmish, we also came across an officer called Amir-i majlis (lord of the assembly). He arranged and supervised the royal festivities called majlis- i aish (convivial assembly). Majlis-i aish was one of the many assemblies or parties held during the period of the Sultans of Delhi.[128] It was celebratory meetings in which those who enjoyed the confidence of the Sultan were the only invitees. A class of courtiers called nadims (friends) also came into existence who entertained the Sultan in his leisure hours. Saifuddin Aibak Yugantat, the governor of Lakhnauti, at one time also held the post of Amir-i majlis during the reign of Iltutmish.[129]

We do not have sufficient information regarding the structure of the provincial and local administration during the reign of Iltutmish. As shown above, the Sultan had entrusted the administration of the provinces to Muqta's and their subordinate officers. Stray references in contemporary historical literature indicate that Iltutmish took personal interest in the administration of the provinces as well. After the defeat of Qabacha, writes Isami, Iltutmish spent a whole month in settling the affairs of the great cities of Lahore and Multan.[130] He did the same in Gwalior. After its conquest in 1232, Iltutmish appointed amirs and eminent men to different offices. Ziyauddin Junaidi was appointed Amir-i dad of Gwalior, Sipahsalar Rashiduddin became seneschal (probably, in charge of domestic arrangements and the administration of servants) and Minhaj- us Siraj the celebrated author of *Tabaqat-i- Nasiri* was

appointed to the offices of Qazi, Khatib and Imam of the city.[131] These facts indicate that the Sultan did not neglect the affairs of the provinces and personally chose officers for important towns in these units. However, the day to day functioning in these areas remained in the hands of Muqta', who take certain liberty in his area of jurisdiction.

Not only was the present system of government, Iltutmish also worried about the future ruling candidate. He tried to perpetuate kingship in his own family. Like Mahmud of Ghazni, he had the requisite power and authority to nominate his successor during his own lifetime. But the Sultan's decision to nominate his successor was not guided by his desire to see any of his progeny on the throne of Delhi out of fatherly love and anxiety to keep the kingship in his own family. Rather he was driven by the desire to ensure that the fittest among his progeny should adorn the throne after him. From his reply to Yalduz way back in 1215 (for details see chapter three), it is clear that the Sultan believed in the survival of the fittest. Therefore when he decided to nominate one of his children as his successor, he chose the most capable among them to take over the mantle from him. The problem was that his most capable son and also the heir designate, Prince Nasiruddin Mahmud (d. 1230-31) had already passed away.[132] Ignoring all emotional and filial considerations, Iltutmish tried to maintain a balance between the principle of hereditary succession and the requisite ability to govern and preferred to nominate his daughter Raziya, the ablest among his progeny, as his successor ignoring the claims of his other surviving sons. This was also in keeping with the time-honoured Turkish traditions. Habibullah has rightly observed that 'a most overriding consideration which their racial history had taught the Turks to respect was the greater ability and fitness of the candidate to rule.'[133] Thus neither the Turkish racial traditions nor the Iranian culture appear to have been averse to a female candidate.[134] But both the Ghaznavid and the Ghorid states to which the early Turkish Sultans of Delhi looked for

guidance and inspiration were devoid of such precedence. It was therefore hardly surprising that Iltutmish's directive to his Secretary of state Taj ul Mulk, while returning from the Gwalior campaign (1232), to draft a decree naming his daughter as his heir apparent did not go down well with most Turkish officials. Some of them who had access to the Sultan did take the courage to ask him to specify the reason for taking up such step. We are told by Minhaj-i Siraj that in humble tone they asked, 'In as much as he has grown-up sons who are eligible for the sovereignty, what scheme and what object has the Sultan of Islam in view in making a daughter sovereign and heir-apparent? Be pleased to remove this difficulty from our minds, as this deed does not seem advisable to your humble servants.'[135] Their objection clearly indicates that they were confused and not mentally prepared to see a lady adorning the throne. It was indeed a daring innovation on the part of Iltutmish that he took a step that was in the interest of the state albeit not in keeping with the established tradition. Iltutmish's response also clearly evinces his faith in the ability of his daughter. We are again told by Minhaj that the Sultan told his officers that 'My sons are engrossed in the pleasure of youth, and none of them possesses the capability of managing the affairs of the country, and by them the government of the kingdom will not be carried out. After my death it will be seen that not one of them will be found to be more worthy of the heir-apparentship than she, my daughter.'[136] Iltutmish had in fact already shown his preference for Razia when he had entrusted the administration of Delhi to her while going for the Gwalior campaign.[137]

Peter Jackson suggests the story of the declaration of Raziya as successor may be apocryphal and seems to have been circulated by those who enthroned her because Minhaj did not have the first hand knowledge of the event as he was at Gwalior during the period from where he returned in 1238.[138] But the view of Isami, who was the descendant of the nobility of

Delhi, is significant in this regard. He writes that when the nobles assembled in the royal palace after the death of Ruknuddin Firuz (1236), whom they had enthroned at Delhi after the demise of Sultan Iltutmish, Raziya let loose her scarf from the window and said, 'Here I am, the daughter of His majesty; the royal crown befits my head. It is I whom the king had chosen as his heir-apparent; to me he had entrusted his seal. Since you went beyond the king's order and set the crown on the head of another person, you finally came to grief. Now you regret having done so. Verily, in this world whoever disregards king's order regrets it in the end…'[139] The statement of Raziya suggests that she had been nominated as the successor by her father. In fact, the choice of Iltutmish was not wrong for Raziya proved her worth in the short span of four years. Refusing to be a puppet in the hands of the Turkish nobility, she discarded the veil, assumed the imperial robe and transacted business openly in court.[140]

There is no denying the fact that Iltutmish's decision to nominate Raziya as his successor was bold as well as unprecedented. He was convinced that Raziya in spite of being a woman was fit to rule and that on the basis of her gender her claim to rule should not be denied and that she should get what she deserved. That the Sultan took such a step in the thirteenth century speaks volume about his courage and statesmanship. It displayed more than anything else, the liberal outlook and judicious mindset of Iltutmish.

VII

Needless to say that the structure of administration created by Iltutmish was elaborate and up to the mark. It not only served the purpose at that time but also set an example for the succeeding generations to follow. The Sultan left his mark on every root and branch of the government of the Sultanate. He organized the Iqta', raised a strong central army, built and

nurtured a capital, launched a uniform and well thought out monetary system, and brought into existence a team of efficient officers. What is more remarkable is that he accomplished all this in a span of mere twenty-six years. He was just and generous towards his subjects. We know that when Razia raised her voice against the tyranny of her brother Ruknuddin Firuz, she reminded a gathering of army men of the benevolence of Iltutmish and the justice and equity of his rule. Her cry for help had the desired effect and they rose in revolt against Rukn uddin.[141] Even the general public is said to have participated in the uprising. Iltutmish had left such positive impression on the minds and hearts of his subjects that even after his death people were attached to him and mere mention of his name could stir their emotions. The Sufi poet Jamaluddin Hansvi (d. 1260) was also an admirer of Iltutmish. Long after the death of the Sultan, he wrote that 'the king of the age is no more but his memory survives; it is cherished both by the learned and the ignorant.'[142]

NOTES:

[1] Muhammad Habib and K. A. Nizami, *A Comprehensive History of India, vol. V, Part I: The Delhi Sultanate (AD 1206-1526)*, (New Delhi: People's Publishing House, 1996; first published, 1970), p. 226

[2] U. N. Day, *The Government of the Sultanate* (New Delhi : Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1993; first published, 1972), p. 20

[3] I. H. Siddiqui, *Authority and Kingship under the Sultans of Delhi* (13th- 14th century) (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 2006), p. 08

[4] Ibid, p. 11

[5]Ishtiaq Husain Qureshi, *The Administration of the Sultanate of Delhi* (New Delhi: Oriental Books Reprint Corporation, 1971), p. 47

[6] Fakhr –i-Mudabbir as quoted in *The Administration of the Sultanate of Delhi,* p. 47

[7] Muhammad Aziz Ahmad, *Political History and Institutions of the Early Turkish Empire of Delhi (1206-1290 A.D.)*, (New Delhi: Oriental books reprint corporation, first Indian edition, 1972; first published, 1949), p. 48

[8] K. A. Nizami, *Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India during the Thirteenth Century* (New Delhi: Asia Publishing House, 1961), p. 97

[9] Ann K. S. Lambton, 'Reflection on the Iqta' in George Makdisi (ed.) *Arabic and Islamic Studies in honor of Hamilton A. R. Gibb* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965), p. 359

[10] Ibid, p. 360. Ushr was the land tax and was charged at the rate of 1/10th of the produce and was levied only from the Muslims.

[11] Ibid, p. 361

[12] Ibid, p. 365

[13] Ibid.

[14] Ibid, p.367

[15] Ibid., p 367

[16] W. H. Moreland, *Agrarian System of Moslem India* (Delhi: Low Price Publications, 2003; first published, 1929), p. 27

[17] Doab in modern days extend up to Allahabad. Doab mentioned in the writings of medieval chroniclers was much smaller. It lied between Ganga and Yamuna and did not extend beyond Aligarh. During the thirteenth century, this region was divided into three provinces, Meerut, Baran (Bulandshahr), and Kol (Aligarh). See Moreland, p. 23

[18] Ziyauddin Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi,* translated into Urdu by Syed Moin ul Haq (Lahore: Urdu Science Board, 2004) p. 125

[19] Moreland, p. 28. Raverty's translation of the word Iqta' as 'fief' is misleading because the Muqta's were subject to greater control then the fief holders who were the virtual sovereign of the land they occupied.

[20] Irfan Habib, 'Iqta's: Distribution of Revenue Resources Among the Ruling Class' in Tapan Raychaudhary and Irfan Habib (eds.) *The Cambridge Economic History of India, Vol I: c. 1200- c. 1750* (Delhi: Orient Longman, 1984; first published, 1982), p. 69

[21] A. B. M. Habibullah, *The Foundation of Muslim Rule in India* (Allahabad: Central Publishing House, 1945), p. 209-10

[22] Minhaj-i-Siraj Juzjani, *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, translated into English by Major H. G. Raverty (Calcutta: The Asiatic Society, 1995; first published, 1881), vol. II, p. 728

[23] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri* vol. I, p. 613; vol. II, p. 724

[24] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 726

[25] Ibid, p. 728

[26] Ibid, p. 733. Alauddin Khalji reversed the proportion of the state's share during his reign. 4/5th of the war booty became the king's share and only 1/5th went to the army.

[27] Ibid, p. 724

[28] Hasan Nizami, *Taj ul Ma'asir*, translated into English by Bhagwat Saroop (Delhi: Saud Ahmad Dehlavi, 1998), p. 333

[29] Moreland, p. 29

[30] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, pp. 732-33

[31] Ibid, p. 746

[32] Bihar was assigned to Malik Saifuddin Aibak Yugantat and after him to Tughril Tughan Khan by Iltutmish as Iqta'. See *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 731 & p. 736. But at a later date, Minhaj described it as a preserved city. See *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 757

[33] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 613; vol. II, p. 723

[34] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 724

[35] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 730

[36] Peter Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate: A Political and Military History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 97

[37] *Authority and Kingship under the Sultans of Delhi,* p. 74; Iqtidar Husain Siddiqui, *Composite Culture under the Sultanate of Delh*i (New Delhi: Primus Books, 2012), pp. 34-35

[38] Ain ul Mulk Mahru, *Insha-i-Mahru* as cited in *Authority and Kingship under the Sultans of Delhi,* p. 74; *Composite Culture under the Sultanate of Delh*i p. 34

[39] Isami, *Futuh al Salatin*, translated into English by Agha Mahdi Husain (London: Asia Publishing House, 1977), vol. II, p. 236

[40] Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi,* p. 125

[41] *Futuh al Salatin,* op.cit., p. 219

[42] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 691

[43] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 739

[44] *Taj ul Ma'asir,* p.292

[45] *Taj ul Ma'asir,* p.335

[46] Ibid, p. 327

[47] *A Comprehensive History of India, vol. V, Part I: The Delhi Sultanate,* p. 206

[48] *Futuh al Salatin,* p. 219. From Barani's account regarding the gradation of army, the following information can be drawn regarding the pattern of the organization of the army: 10 Sawars = 1 Sarkhel; 10 Sarkhels = 1 Sipahsalar;10 Sipahsalars = 1 Amir; 10 Amirs = 1 Malik; 10 Maliks = 1 Khan, See, Ziyauddin Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi,* p. 238

[49] *Taj ul Ma'asir,* p. 326

[50] *Futuh al Salatin,* p. 226

[51] *Taj ul Ma'asir,* pp. 343-44

[52] Barani, *Tarikh i Firoz Shahi,* p. 834

[53] *Futuh al Salatin,* p. 224

[54] Sadiduddin Muhammad Awfi, *Jawami 'ul Hikayat wa Lavami 'ul Rivaayat* as cited in I.H. Siddiqui, *Indo Persian Historiography up to the Thirteenth Century* (Delhi: Primus Books, 2010), p. 84

[55] Ziyauddin Barani, *Tarikh i Firoz Shahi,* p. 197

[56] The maternal grandfather of the poet Amir Khusrau, known commonly as Imad ul Mulk held a high position during the period of Balban. However, it is not clear whether he was the same man who served as the Ariz-i-mumalik of Iltutmish.

[57] *Futuh al Salatin,* p. 217

[58] *Taj ul Ma'asir,* p. 326

[59] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 599

[60]*Futuh al Salatin,*, p. 227

[61] *Jawami 'ul Hikayat wa Lavami 'ul Rivaayat* as cited in I.H. Siddiqui, *Indo Persian Historiography up to the Thirteenth Century*, p. 84

[62] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 790

[63] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 796

[64] Supriya Verma and Jaya Menon, 'Archaeology and the Construction of Identities in Medieval North India,' *Studies in History*, 24, 2 (2008), p. 180

[65] Amir Hasan Sijzi, *Fawa'idul Fu'ad*, translated into English by Ziya ul Haqq Farooqi (New Delhi: D. K. Print world (P) Ltd., 1992), p. 297; also see the English translation by Bruce B. Lawrence (New York: Paulist Press, 1992), p. 253.

[66]*Composite Culture under the Sultanate of Delh*i, p. 20

[67] Iqtidar Husain Siddiqui, 'Historical Information in the Thirteenth Century Collection of Persian Poems,' *Studies in Islam*, 19 (1982), p. 54

[68] Ibn-i- Battuta, *The Rehla of Ibn-i-Battuta*, translated into English by Agha Mahdi Husain (Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1976; first edition, 1953), p. 94

[69] A rati is a red and white seed of the plant Abrus precatorius. It was the traditional unit of weight used in Indian coinage.

[70] Obverse and reverse are the two sides of the coin. Obverse is the side of the coin bearing the head or principal design, the chief front side while the other side is called reverse.

[71] H. Nelson Wright, *The Coinage and Metrology of the Sultans of Delhi* (New Delhi: Oriental Books Reprint Corporation, first Indian edition,1974), p. 12 & p.67

[72] Edward Thomas, *The Chronicles of the Pathan Kings of Dehli* (Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Oriental Publishers, first Indian edition, 1967), p. 17

[73] Nelson Wright, op. cit., p. 68

[74] Adris Banerji, 'Delhi under Early Muslim Rulers,' *Journal of Asiatic Society*, vol VI, No's 1 & 2, 1964, p. 09-10

[75] Nelson Wright, p. 15 & p. 70

[76] Edward Thomas, op. cit. pp. 78-79

[77] Richard M. Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier* (1204-1760), (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2010; first Indian edition, 1994), pp. 34-35

[78] *The Foundation of Muslim Rule in India,* p. 236

[79] One should not be confused between weight and exchange rate. The weight of the two metals can be same but they were exchanged on the basis of the face value or actual price of the metal.

[80] Kalima is the Muslim confession of faith.

[81] Edward Thomas, op. cit. p. 79

[82] Nelson Wright, op. cit., p. 71

[83] A different viewpoint is expressed by Ahmad Hasan Dani about the horseman type coins. He asserts that the horseman type has never been popular in Bengal and Gaur has never been used as a mint name in the coins. The most popular mint town was Lakhnauti which begins to appear on the coins from the time of Raziya onwards. He further writes that the word should be read as Nagore, a well known place in Rajputana. The horseman type coin was very popular in Rajputana and other places in North India. He opines that the presence of these coins in Bihar and Gauhati hoards is merely a chance and could have reached there along with the invading forces or merchants. For the views of A. H. Dani, see A. H. Dani, 'Did Ghiyath al Din Iwad Khalji of Bengal receive investiture from the Khalifah?', *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society (JPHS)* 3, 1955, p. 110

[84] Ibid, p. 109

[85] Nelson Wright, op. cit., p. 72

[86] In Deccan one Jital was equal to 1/50th of a Tankah owing to the slightly higher price of copper across the Vindhyas where it was imported from overseas.

[87] Nelson Wright, p. 74

[88] Edward Thomas, pp. 73-74

[89] Simon Digby, 'Iltutmish or Iletmish? A Reconsideration of the Name of the Delhi Sultan,' *Iran*, vol. 8, 1970, p. 63

[90] Asawari is the title of Goddess Durga . The earlier coins of Chahar Deva had 'Sri Samanta Deva' on the obverse and 'Sri Chahada Deva' on the reverse. See Edward Thomas, p. 70

[91] Nelson Wright, p. 74

[92] *The Foundation of Muslim Rule in India,* p. 239

[93] Simon Digby, 'The Currency System' in Tapan Raychaudhari and Irfan Habib (eds.) *The Cambridge Economic History of India, vol I: c. 1200- c. 1750* , op. cit., p. 96

[94] Nelson Wright, p. 33

[95] Nelson Wright, p. 75

[96] G. S. Khwaja, 'Coinage and Metrology of Sultan Iltutmish ,' *Journal of the Numismatic Society of India (JNSI),* vol. LXVII (2005), p. 102

[97] *Futuh al Salatin,* p. 226

[98] For the views of Iltutmish, see *Taj ul Ma'asir,* pp. 334-35

[99] *Taj ul Ma'asir,* p. 336

[100] *Taj ul Ma'asir,* p. 290

[101] Ibid, p. 292

[102] *Futuh al Salatin,* p. 235

[103] Barani, *Tarikh i Firoz Shahi,* p. 117

[104] *Jawami 'ul Hikayat wa Lavami 'ul Rivaayat* as cited in *Indo Persian Historiography up to the Thirteenth Century,* p. 83

[105] *Taj ul Ma'asir,* p. 336

[106] Ibn-i- Battuta, p. 33

[107] They were punished on the basis of the report submitted by Sharafuddin Abu Bik, the paymaster general who was deputed to investigate the matter by the Wazir Nizamul Mulk Junaidi.

[108] *Jawami 'ul Hikayat wa Lavami 'ul Rivaayat* as cited *Indo Persian Historiography up to the Thirteenth Century,* p. 84

[109] Muhammad Qasim Hindu Shah Ferishta, *Tarikh-i Ferishta*, translated into English by John Briggs as *History of the Rise of Muhammadan Power in India* (Delhi: Low Price Publications, 2006; first published, 1829) vol. I, p. 118

[110] *Futuh al Salatin,* pp. 244-45. Iltutmish showed respect and kindness to him and offered him many presents. On the very same day of his arrival in Delhi, Fakr ul Mulk was appointed as his minister. He was the ancestor of the historian Isami.

[111] R.P. Tripathi, *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration* (Allahabad: Central Book Depot, 1992; first published, 1936) p. 170

[112] I. H. Qureshi, op. cit., p. 84

[113] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 635 & p. 638

[114] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 638

[115] *The Foundation of Muslim Rule in India,* p. 198

[116] Sadiduddin Muhammad Awfi, *Jawami 'ul Hikayat wa Lavami 'ul Rivaayat* as cited in I.H. Siddiqui, *Indo Persian Historiography up to the Thirteenth Century*, p. 86

[117] *The Foundation of Muslim Rule in India,* p. 198

[118] *Futuh al Salatin,* pp. 218-19

[119] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 745

[120] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 752 & 757

[121] Hamida Khatooon Naqvi, *Agricultural, Industrial and Urban Dynamism under the Sultans of Delhi* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt Ltd, 1986), p. 30

[122] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 626, fn 08

[123] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 613; Barani, *Tarikh i Firoz Shahi,* p. 92

[124] Nizam ul Mulk Tusi, *Siyasatnama,* as quoted in I. H. Qureshi, op. cit., p. 59

[125] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 730

[126] For reference to various Sar-i-jandars of Iltutmish , see *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 728, 729, 750

[127] For reference see *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 723, 736, 743

[128] The other majlises were the Imperial Council (Majlis i Khas) and Privy Council (Majlis i Khilwat). Modeled on the traditions of Sasanid Persia, the imperial Council was the Council of highest officers and discussed problems relating to executive, legislative and financial. The Privy Council was the one in which most trusted servants were invited. The representatives of four ministries generally presented themselves before the Sultan and reported about the affairs of their respective departments. For more about these assembles, see *Political History and Institutions of the Early Turkish Empire of Delhi (1206-1290 A.D.),* pp. 336-39; also refer to Muhammad Aziz Ahmad, 'The Imperial Majlises in the Early Sultanate Period', *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, fifth session (Hyderabad), 1941, p. 322

[129] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 731

[130] *Futuh al Salatin,* p. 225

[131] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 620

[132] Minhaj writes that when the dresses of distinction from Baghdad reached the presence of Iltutmish, from among them he selected one dress of great value and dispatched it to Lakhnauti along with a red canopy of state to Prince Nasiruddin. All the maliks and grandees of the kingdom of Hind had their eyes upon him that he would be the heir to the Shamsi dominions but unfortunately the Prince died a year and half later. See *Tabaqat- i- Nasiri*, vol. I, p. 630

[133] A. B. M. Habibullah, 'Sultanah Raziah', *Indian Historical Quarterly*, 1940, vol. IV, p. 754

[134] One of the feudatory rulers of Khwarazm was succeeded early in the 12th century by his only child, a daughter. Even though she was married to Qutbuddin, the founder of Khwarazmian dynasty, she acted as the sovereign and Qutbuddin served as her viceroy. See *Tabaqat- i- Nasiri*, vol. I, p. 234. The Qarakhitai's were ruled for several years by the widow of the deceased Gur Khan (d. 537 AH/ 1142-43 AD) and then by his daughter, Koyunk Khatun. See *Tabaqat- i- Nasiri*, vol. II, pp. 927-28. Puran Dukht and Arjumand Dukht, daughters of Khusrav Parvez of the Sassanian dynasty are reported to have ascended the throne one after the other early in the seventh century in Iran.

[135] *Tabaqat- i- Nasiri*, vol. I, pp. 638-39

[136] Ibid, p. 639

[137] Ferishta, p. 121

[138] Peter Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate,* p. 46

[139] *Futuh al Salatin*, p. 250

[140] For Raziya and her reign of four years, see *Tabaqat- i- Nasiri*, vol. I, pp. 637-48. For Raziya's propensity to associate herself with traditionally masculine symbols, titles, and imagery, and other such issues, see Alyssa Gabbay, 'In Reality a Man: Sultan Iltutmish, His Daughter, Raziya and Gender Ambiguity in Thirteenth Century Northern India', *Journal of Persianate Studies*, 4 (2011), pp. 45-63

[141] Ibn-i- Battuta, p. 34

[142] I. H. Siddiqui, 'Historical Information in the Thirteenth Century Collection of Persian Poems,' op. cit., p. 62

CHAPTER SIX

From Ghulam to Ghazi: The Nobility under Shamsuddin Iltutmish

Turkish slaves never enjoyed the monopoly of political authority in the Delhi Sultanate, even in the seventh/thirteenth century that they did in Mamluk Egypt.[1]

Peter Jackson

The Sultan of Delhi was not only the chief executive of the state, he was the chief representative of the ruling class as well. The members of the ruling class or nobles designated as Khan, Malik and Amir governed the empire at the behest and on behalf of the Sultan. In fact, many a Sultan, including Iltutmish himself, were themselves nobles and had succeeded in wielding royal authority by sheer dint of merit and manipulative skill. The success and failure of an individual Sultan depended to a very large extent on the administrative ability and military prowess of his nobility. It would therefore be no exaggeration to suggest that the history of the Delhi Sultanate is in large measures the saga of the achievements and failure of the nobility. It is common knowledge that the nobility of the Delhi Sultanate was heterogeneous in character and comprised of different ethnic, religious and racial groups. The recruitment of men who deserved to be members of the elite ruling class and keeping them on a tight leash also demonstrated the administrative ability and survival instincts of the Sultan. In the early years of Iltutmish's reign when the question of the endurance and consolidation of the Sultanate was foremost, dependence upon the major officers and elite corps of his retinue was the only choice the Sultan had, as his

own position was also far from stable. That the Sultan not only survived but also created a legitimacy for his family which enabled his descendants to rule for three decades after his death was as much due to his own statesmanship as owing to the efficiency and efficacy of his nobles. Needless to say that an intensive study of the Shamsi nobility will certainly add to our understanding of the life and times of Iltutmish. This chapter therefore attempts to examine the nature and character of the nobles and officers of Iltutmish: their origin, composition, lifestyle and privileges, duties as well as the mode of their appointment, promotion and punishment. Who were the most important nobles during the reign of Iltutmish and what was the nature of their relations with each other and with the Sultan will be explored in detail. The question of Turk-i-Chihilgani will be analyzed particularly in the light of the account of the Turk- i- Chihilgani given by Ziyauddin Barani and the biographies of some of the Shamsi nobles furnished by Minhaj.

I

The term 'Amir' (p. umara) means a commander, governor, king, chief, leader, lord or prince; in short, a person of rank and eminence or a member of the ruling class. In the early thirteenth century, an amir or noble was one who commanded a certain number of troops or held a position in the government. According to Irfan Habib, the nobility encompassed those individuals who were given territorial assignment (*iqta*) and were designated as *muqti*.[2] However, the holder of *iqta* was not feudal lord in the European sense. The *muqti* served at the pleasure of the Sultan and had no hereditary claim over the territory he administered. A better definition of 'noble' in the context of Medieval India is given by Athar Ali. He opines that the term nobility denotes 'the class of persons who were officers of the king and at the same time formed the superior class in the political order.'[3]

We know that the expansion of the Islamic empire outside Arabia led to drastic changes in the structure of its religious and political institutions. During the reign of Muawiyah (661-89) the 'republican Caliphate' was altered into monarchy, capital was transferred from Medina to Damascus and an exclusive governing class consisting of the members of the leading Arab tribes came into existence.[4] Since then, the two institutions namely the monarchy and the governing class became an integral part of the Muslim polity. Far more significant changes in the political structure of Islam followed the foundation of the Abbasid rule (750-1258). Caliph Mutasi'm (833-89), for instance, introduced the Turkish element in the army and civil administration. Before long, the Turks eked out the Persians from all positions of power and influence; the ordinary post of royal bodyguard as well as the highest offices of the state became their exclusive preserve. Soon the Turks became the virtual masters of the Caliphate. Once the courtiers of Mu'taz, we are told, summoned the astrologers and asked them to prophesize about the tenure of his reign. A wit present in the gathering remarked 'so long as the Turks please'.[5] With the decline of the Abbasid dynasty, political hegemony passed into the hands of semi-independent, hereditary governors. Most of these regional states imitated the Abbasid Caliphs and buttressed their own power by maintaining regiments of Turkish slave guards (Arabic, ghulam / mamluk; Persian banda) recruited from the pagan steppe lands of Central Asia. The Turkish slaves or ghulams had no parallel with others forms of slavery. They were not employed as bonded labour and were treated with utter contempt as was the vogue in pre-Islamic Arabia or the United States of America before the abolition of slavery. In fact, the Turkish slaves enjoyed a particularly high reputation for their martial skills and religious orthodoxy. The ghulams were, in fact, highly prized by their masters who gave them instructions in the Islamic faith as well as a rigorous military training.[6] Slave traffic was not the only medium through which the Turks came into the

fold of Islamic civilization. They also came in as free-men, in large scale migration or invading armies of the recently converted nomadic tribal groups from Central Asia,[7] for instance, the Seljuks.

The Abbasid practice of recruiting the official bureaucracy from among Turkish slaves was adopted and elaborated by the Samanids. Muhammad Aziz Ahmad has also suggested that while the bureaucracy owed its classification from the decimal system of the Turks, its origin may be traced to the slaves purchased and trained by the 'minor dynasties' of Persia from the time of the Samanids.[8] By the time of Mahmud all higher military commands and most administrative assignments became the monopoly of the Turkish slave bureaucracy. The Samanid system of recruitment of bureaucracy was also espoused by the Ghorid Turks. Mu'izuddin Muhammad bin Sam kept a large retinue of Turkish slave officers. He patronized and looked after them like his children. Once a courtier of the Sultan, we are told, asked him as to who would govern his Empire after him as the Sultan was issueless. Mu'izuddin replied, 'other monarchs may have one son, or two sons: I have so many thousand sons, namely my Turk slaves, who will be the heirs of my dominions and who, after me, will take care to preserve my name in the Khutbah throughout those territories'.[9] The Sultan's confidence in his Turkish slave commanders was not misplaced. It would be no exaggeration to suggest that the establishment of an independent Muslim power in India was to a large extent due to the efforts of Turkish slave officers of Mu'izuddin.[10]

After the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate, Iltutmish continued the practice of the recruitment Turkish slaves in the bureaucracy of the Sultanate. Slave trade had by now become one of the most flourishing trades of the time. The slave traders were handsomely paid for their investment and labour. Slaves were brought in large numbers from far off places and were even

paraded in the court of Iltutmish for sale.[11] A large section of the nobility of Iltutmish therefore came to consist of Turkish slave officers. They participated in all the major battles and played a crucial role in the expansion of the Sultanate. However, it should be kept in mind that not all slaves were promoted to high rank. Their promotion was dependent on their performance and proximity with the Sultan. A number of them were entrusted menial jobs in the palace. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, slaves were also employed as artisans and ordinary labourers fairly extensively.[12] Slaves were also used as an article of gift.[13] Needless to say that the ruling class in the Sultanate was no different from its counterparts in Iran and Central Asia except the fact that in India, the large majority of the ruled followed an alien religion and culture. Therefore, the monarch and his officers were bound to modify certain policies so as to mould it in accordance with the Indian environment. In the initiation and execution of all such policies, Iltutmish was ably served by his officers or in popular parlance by his nobility.

II

As mentioned above, a large section of nobility during the period of Iltutmish comprised of Turkish slave officers known as bandagan-i-Shamsi (slaves of Shamsuddin Iltutmish). They had the lion's share in the Sultanate bureaucracy. According to Peter Jackson, the Muslim forces of the Ghorid Sultan brought to India two major institutions: one was iqta and the other was mamluk or military slave.[14] Minhaj has given an account of twenty-five slave-officers of Iltutmish in the twenty second section of his much celebrated work *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri.* This account however leaves much to be desired. He has written, especially this section, as a client of the then de facto ruler Balban (r.1266-86). Therefore, instead of focusing on the senior officers of Iltutmish, he has provided a much larger space to those Turkish officers or the junior-slaves of Iltutmish who actually became prominent during the reign of the progeny of the Sultan. In fact,

those officers who had especially contributed to the rise of Balban have been given undue importance. There are significant omissions as well. The career of Balban's staunch enemy Qutlugh Khan is, for instance, has been completely overlooked. In the same vein, not a single free born Turkish officer finds a place in the aforementioned list and Hindu Khan is the only non-Turkish slave officer whose biography has been sketched. Minhaj wrote the *Tabaqat* during the reign of Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud (r.1246-66) when the career and star of Balban was on the ascendance. Hence, Balban is accorded the longest biography of all.

Nevertheless, this section of the *Tabaqat* is of considerable importance in collecting information about some of the prominent officers of Iltutmish. It also throw a great deal of light on the process of sale of the slaves, the mode of their training, the initial offices entrusted to the slave officers, the first military assignment given to them and their prospect of promotion.

Tabaqat twenty-two comprises the biographies of twenty- five Shamsi officers, all Turks except off course, Hindu Khan. Nearly all of them started their career as a slave purchased by Iltutmish.[15] A large number of these slave nobility were purchased direct from well known slave traders. From the account of Minhaj, it is clear that merchants from Sijistan (a kingdom to the east of Persia),[16] Isfahan,[17] Sinn,[18] Abyssinia,[19] Central Asia, and Basra[20] continuously visited Hindustan during his period. Ibn Battuta writes that Iltutmish sent merchants to Samarqand, Bukhara and Tirmiz to buy Turkish slaves on his behalf.[21] The circumstances under which these Turkish youths were brought to the slave-market varied from person to person. Some of them had allegedly been sold into slavery by the jealous relatives like Iltutmish himself. Saifuddin Aibak (serial no. 22 in Table 1 & Table 5. All the serial numbers in the chapter have been taken from Table 1 & Table 5; hereafter s. no.) was also a victim of the discord of the kindred.[22]

Table 1: Twenty-five Shamsi Maliks and the positions held by them till the end of Iltutmish's reign (compiled on the basis of Minhaj's biographical sketch in Tabaqat twenty-two)

S. NO.	NAME OF THE SHAMSI OFFICER	PURCHASED FROM	APPOINTMENT TO VARIOUS OFFICES	ALLOTMENT OF IQTA' (UP TILL 1236)*
1. II: 722-24**	Tajuddin Sanjar-i-Gajzlak Khan	Khawajah Ali Bastabadi	Chashnigir → Amir-i-Akhur	Wanjrut (in Bahawalpur state of Multan (625 AH/1228 AD) → Kuhram → Tabarhindah → Uchch. Died in 629H/ 1231-32 AD.
2. II: 724-27	Izzuddin Kabir Khan Ayaz-i-Hazar Mardan al Muizzi	Sher-i-Khan-i- Surkh and his brothers (sons of Nasiruddin Husain, Amir-i-Shikar of Ghazni)	?	Multan (in 625 AH/1228 AD) → Palwal (around 629 AH/1232 AD)
3. II: 727-28	Nasiruddin Aiyitim ul Bahai	from the heirs of Bahauddin Tughril	Sar-i-Jandar	Lahore → the Siwalik country and Ajmer, Lawah, Kasili and Sambhar Namak. Died during an expedition against Bundi (while in Ajmer)
4. II: 729-31	Saifuddin Aibak-i- Uchch	Jamaluddin , the armourer	Sar-i-Jandar	Narnaul → Sunam → Uchch (after the death of Gajzlak Khan)

5. II: 731-32	Saifuddin Aibak-i-Yughantat	From the heirs of Ikhtiyaruddin Chust Qaba	Amir-i-Majlis	Sarsuti → Bihar→ Lakhnauti (after the deposition of Alauddin Jani). Died in 631AH/1233-34 AD
6. II: 732-36	Nusratuddin Tayasa'i	?	?	Feudatory of Jhind, Barwalah and Hansi (during 625AH/1228 AD)→ Biyana, Sultankot and Shahnagi of Gwalior
7. II: 736-42	Izzauddin Tughril-i- Tughan Khan	?	Saqi-i-Khas → Sar dawatdar → Chasnhigir → Amir-i-Akhur	Badaun (in 631 AH/ 1234 A.D.) → Bihar (when Yughantat was transferred to Lakhnauti) →Lakhnauti (when Yughantat died)
8. II: 742-44	Qamaruddin Qiran-i- Tamur Khan us Sultani	Asaduddin Mankali, brother's son of Firuz Iltutmish	Naib-i-Amir-i-Akhur → Amir-i-Akhur (when Tughril Tughan Khan was assigned Badaun)	
9. II: 744-46	Hindu Khan, Mu'ayyid uddin Mihtar-i-Mubarak ul Khazin as Sultani	Fakruddin, the Safahani	Yuzban → Torchbearer →Tashtdar → Treasurer of the Empire	
10. II: 746-47	Ikhtiyaruddin Qaraqash Khan-i-Aetkin	?	Saqi-i-Khas	Fief of Barihun (?) and Darangawan (?)→ Superintendent of the Khalisah

				of Tabarhindah → Multan (after Kabir Khan Ayaz was deposed)
11. II: 748-49	Ikhtiyar uddin Altunia	?	Sharabdari → Sar Chatardar	
12. II: 749-52	Ikhtiyaruddin Aetkin	Amir Aibak Sannai	Sar-i-Jandar	Mansurpur (West of Delhi, north-west of Kaithal) → Kujah and Nandanah (a district and fortress in Sindh Sagar Doab
13. II: 752-54	Badruddin Sunkar Rumi	?	Tashtdar → Balahdar → Shahnah of the Zarrakhana of Badaun (office same as Sar-i- Jandar) →Naib Amir-i- Akhur → Amir-i-Akhur	
14. II: 754-56	Tajuddin Sanjar-i- Kikluk	Khwajah Jamaluddin Nadiman	Jamadar →Shahnah of the Stable	
15. II: 756-57	Tajuddin Sanjar-i Kuret Khan	?	Shahnah of rivers and vessels	
16. II: 757-58	Saifuddin Bat Khan-i- Aibak, the Khitai	?	Sar-i- Jamadar	

17. II: 759-60	Tajuddin Sanjar-i- Tez Khan	?	?	
18. II: 761-66	Ikhtiyaruddin Yuzbak-i- Tughril Khan	?	Naib-i- Chashnigir (during Gwalior expedition of the Sultan)	
19. II: 766-74	Tajuddin Arsalan Khan, Sanjar-i-Chast	Ikhtiyar ul Mulk Abu Bikr, the Habsh	Jamahdar	
20. II: 775-87	Izzuddin Balban-i-Kishlu Khan as Sultani	From a merchant during Mandor Campaign (624AH/ 1227 AD)	Saqi-i-Khas→ Sharabdar (during Gwalior Campaign of the Sultan)	Barhamun (?)→ Baran
21. II: 787-88	Nusrat Khan, Badruddin Sunkar-i- Sufi	?	He held many offices but no specific detail is available	
22. II: 788-91	Saifuddin Aibak, the dadbeg, the Shamsi Ajami	Khwajah Shamsuddin of Ajam	It is said that Iltutmish sent him on important missions to different parts of the empire but no specific information is extant	
23. II: 791-94	Nusratuddin Sher Khan, Sunkar-i- Saghalsus	?	No information about the rank and office held by him is available	
24. II: 795-99	Saifuddin Aibak-i- Kashli Khan us Sultani	Ikhtiyar ul Mulk Rashiduddin Abu Bikr, the Habsh	Served Iltutmish but details of the offices held by him are not	

			known	
25. II: 799-865	Al- Khan-ul-Muazzam al A'zam Baha ul Haq wa ddin, Ulugh Khan-i- Blaban as Sultani	Khwaja Jamaluddin of Basra	Khasahdar	

* Iqta' allotted after serving in various offices.

** Volume and page number in Minhaj's Tabaqat-*i-Nasiri*, translated by Major H.G. Raverty

→ Indicates change in the assignment of the assignee.

Note: Slaves of the reigning Sultan bore the designation 'Sultani'.

Malik Sunkar Rumi (s. no. 13) and Malik Tajuddin Arsalan Khan (s. no. 19) were also made captive under mysterious circumstances. Both had Muslim parentage. Malik Tajuddin Arsalan Khan was the son of one of the many Khwarazm amirs living in the territory of Syria and Egypt.[23] According to Peter Jackson, the enslavement of both these persons was unlawful as they were progeny of Muslim parents.[24] However, it seems that there was no legal restriction enslaving a Muslim or forcing him into slavery in the earlier period. It is in modern times that such an act is now considered against the tenets of Islam. However Minhaj's assertion that Badruddin Sunkar Rumi was the son of a Musalman and had fallen into slavery,[25]indicate that many of the fresh slaves in the market in earlier times were non-Muslims. They were brought into the fold of Islam either by the merchants or by the dignitaries to whom they were sold. From the 1220s the westward advance of the Mongols also led to the rise in the supply of Turkish slaves. Uprooted from their homes, many well-bodied youths found themselves standing in the slave marts. Both Ulugh Khan Balban and his brother Kashli Khan were the victims of the devastation caused by the Mongols in Turkistan and the neighbouring countries. Kashli Khan, in fact, had fallen into the hands of Mongols.[26] It is likely that the latter had sold him to a merchant. Perhaps the coming of Sher Khan, the cousin of Balban, to Hindustan and his inclusion in the officers of Iltutmish was the result of the same catastrophe. At times, the conqueror would convert the human body into more liquid assets by unloading the captives onto the market. The example of Hindu Khan (s. no. 9), probably a Hindu convert, goes to prove that a large number of captive Indians were also available for sale in the slave market. Iltutmish bought a number of former ghulams of other rulers or state official as well. To this category belonged Kabir Khan Ayaz (s. no. 2), Nasiruddin Aiyitim (s. no. 3) and Nusratuddin Tayasa'i (s. no. 6). Kabir Khan Ayaz was the slave of Nasiruddin Husain, the Amir-i-Shikar of Ghazni.[27] Iltutmish purchased

Ayaz from Sher Khan-i-Surkh, son of Nasiruddin Husain. Nasiruddin Aiyitim was the slave of Bahaudin Tughril and was bought by Iltutmish from his heirs.[28] Nusratuddin Tayasai was the slave of Mu'izuddin Muhammad Ghori.[29] The slaves thus obtained from the descendents of the former rulers/ dignitaries were obviously trained and well-versed in the art of warfare. Kabir Khan Ayaz is said to have accompanied his master Nasiruddin in all martial combats and had become a past master in the art of warfare.[30] Due to their experience and capability, they climbed the ladder of success in a short span in comparison to others. All these three officers of Iltutmish were included in the category of elite corps or bandagan-i-khas of Iltutmish, though Kabir Khan lost that position later. Recruitment of slaves was also carried out during war-expeditions as well as on important diplomatic missions. Iltutmish, for instance, purchased Izzuddin Balban Kishlu Khan (s. no. 20) from a merchant when the Sultan was on the expedition to Mandor (624 AH/ 1227 AD).[31] Similarly, Abu Bakr, the Abyssinian, purchased Saifuddin Kashli Khan (s. no. 24) when he was on a mission from the court of Delhi to Egypt and Bagdad and later sold it to Iltutmish on coming to India.[32] We do not have much information about the price paid by Iltutmish for these slaves. Only regarding one slave the amount is mentioned. Minhaj tell us that Iltutmish purchased Qamaruddin Qiran Tamur Khan (s. no. 8) at the start of his career for 50,000 Sultani dirhams.[33]

According to Minhaj, Iltutmish began purchasing slaves when he was the Muqta of Baran. Tajuddin Gajzlak Khan (s. no. 1) and Hindu Khan (s. no. 9) were acquired in this capacity during the reign of Qutbuddin Aibak.[34] Iltutmish bought Saifuddin Aibak-i-Uchch (s. no. 4) when he was posted in Badaun.[35] Needless to say that the process of recruitment of slaves as officers was started by Iltutmish before his accession to the throne which continued unabated subsequently. The purchasing spree of the slaves was motivated by the fact the capital of the

previous monarch which had a readymade apparatus of government was beyond Iltutmish's control in the beginning. He had to create his own administrative set up and his own fleet of loyal officials. Moreover, the Sultanate was fast expanding requiring sufficient number of able officers. The Turks fit in well in this category. They were known for their equestrian skills and marksmanship. The expertise of Tajuddin Kuret Khan (s. no. 15) a Turkish officer of Iltutmish, in horsemanship and archery has been mentioned by Minhaj with great éclat.[36] The physical features of a man also seem to have played a crucial role in the selection of the slaves. We know that Iltutmish invited the attention of Mu'izzuddin Muhammad Ghori and subsequently Aibak purely owing to his comely features. Muhammad Bakhtiyar Khalji was rejected twice because of his ugly looks.[37] Ibn Battuta also informs us that Balban was initially rejected by Iltutmish because of his unattractive features.[38] Along with the martial qualities and strong and pleasing personality, a slave having appropriate religious learning and pleasing deportment commanded an excellent price in the slave market.[39] Qutbuddin Aibak was said to have received religious training and learned Quran from his master, the Chief Qazi Fakruddin Abdul Aziz Kufi, a descendant of Imam Abu Hanifa.[40] Iltutmish seems to have purchased Saifuddin Aibak (s. no. 22), owing to his religious learning for Minhaj writes, 'in the learning of Musalman faith he (Saifuddin) was proficient, in religiousness perfect…..'[41] As mentioned above the initial training in art of warfare and learning was either provided by the slave trader or by the aristocrat /ruler, especially if a slave had been purchased by him at a young age. We know that Gajzlak Khan was nurtured and brought up along with Prince Nasiruddin Mahmud, the eldest son of Iltutmish.[42] Therefore training in all arts and trades was a necessary concomitant in the elevation of a person from slave to an officer.

From Minhaj's account of the twenty-five Shamsi officers, it is evident that most of them started their career in the royal household. Usually a new entrant was placed in the lower or middle rung of the nobility and held one of the following posts: chasnigir or naib chasnigir,[43] sar-i-jandar,[44] amir-i-majlis,[45] saqi-i-khas,[46] amir-i-akhur or naib amir-i-akhur,[47] yuzban,[48] sharabdar,[49] tashtdar,[50] jamadar,[51] and khasahdar.[52] This provided an opportunity to a ghulam to display his personal ability and serve the monarch's confidence and goodwill. The royal household, suggests K.A. Nizami, served as a nursery for preparing the administrative personnel of the Delhi Sultanate.[53] After proving his ability in several minor offices of responsibility, a slave was assigned his first iqta'. It seems that Iltutmish used to pay his junior officers, in cash, at least while they served on the staff attached to the household. We know that Saifuddin Aibak (s. no. 4) was assigned a sum of three hundred thousand jitals for the maintenance of his office.[54] The prospects of earning a handsome salary and high office naturally ensured the loyalty of a slave towards his master. At the same time it fanned their ambition as well. Promotion however depended on various factors. Along with capability, proximity with the Sultan and longevity of his association with the ruler brightened the prospect of the promotion of an officer. A close look at the list of Minhaj reveals that those slaves/officers who were purchased by Iltutmish early on and had served the Sultan from the very beginning of his reign, or even before that, were promoted to important position while the rest kept on working on minor assignments and got their first significant promotion during the reign of the successors of Iltutmish. It is not surprising because owing to their early association with Iltutmish, the senior slave officers were trusted and appointed on crucial positions by the Sultan (will come to this part again while describing the elite corps among the Turkish slave-officers of Iltutmish). Iltutmish also bestowed high sounding titles to these officers. He exalted Kabir Khan Ayaz (s. no. 2), Saifuddin Aibak (s. no. 5), Hindu

Khan (s. no. 9), and Ikhtiyaruddin Aetkin (s. no. 10) with the titles of Kabir Khan-i-Mangirini,[55] Yughantat,[56] Mihtar-i-Mubarak,[57] and Qaraqash Khan[58] respectively. Iltutmish also gave exemplary punishments to the erring nobles. Both Kabir Khan Ayaz and Alauddin Jani were demoted from their position. Kabir Khan, for instance, transferred from Lahore to Palwal which was a less important iqta'.[59] Similarly Alauddin Jani (though he was not a slave) was removed from Lakhnauti.[60] Izzuddin Tughril Tughan Khan (s. no. 7) was severely chastised when he lost the Sultan's bejeweled pen-case.[61] There is also no evidence that any slave officer was ever manumitted during the reign of Iltutmish.

The account of the twenty-two Shamsi nobles also reveals that they belonged to diverse ethnic and geographical background. Most of the time Minhaj refers to them by the place or area of their origin (refer to Table 2). Only one tribe, Ilbari, is mentioned. The highest number of Turkish officers in the list belonged to the Qipchaq (six) followed by Qarakhita (three), Rum (three), Khita (two), Khwarazm (one) and Transoxiana (one). Three nobles belonged to the Ilbari tribe. Only one Indian slave-officer (the only non-Turkish slave-officer) Hindu Khan finds a place in this list who can be ranked, according to Peter Jackson, as 'the major-domo in overall charge of the sultan's ghulams.'[62] Styled as Lord (mihtar-i-mubarak), he was respected by all Iltutmish slaves as a father figure.[63] None of the free born Turkish and non-Turkish officers has been referred by Minhaj in such glowing term.

The idea behind the purchase and nurturing of slaves who belonged to far-off lands and possessed no local ties was to create a class of officers who would remain completely loyal and thoroughly dedicated to the Sultan. Because of their complete dependence on the Sultan, the slave officers would relate their own rise and fall with the destiny of their master. For the slave

Table 2: List of the Shamsi officers mentioned in Tabaqat twenty-two on the basis of their geographical /tribal origin

QIPCHAQ	QARAKHITA*	KHITA	RUMI	ALBARI TRIBE	KHWARAZM	TRANSOXIANA	HINDUSTAN
Qamaruddin Qiran Tamur Khan (8)**	Izzuddin Tughril Tughan Khan (7)	Saifuddin Aibak Yughantat (5)	Izzuddin Kabir Khan Ayaz (2)	Nusratuddin Sher Khan (23)	Tajuddin Arsalan Khan (19)	Tajuddin Sanjar Tez Khan (17)	Hindu Khan (9)
Tajuddin Sanjar Kikluk (14)	Ikhtiyaruddin Qaraqash Khan Aetkin (10)	Saifuddin Bat Khan Aibak (16)	Badruddin Sunkar Rumi (13)	Saifuddin Aibak Kashli Khan (24)			
Tajuddin Sanjar Kuret Khan (15)	Ikhtiyaruddin Aetkin (12)		Nusrat Khan Badruddin Sunkar Sufi (21)	Ulugh Khan Balban (25)			
Ikhtiyaruddin Yuzbak Tughril							

Khan (18) Izzuddin Balban Kishlu Khan (20) Saifuddin Aibak (22)							

* Qarakhita and Khita must be taken as a geographical areas and not ethnic group. Qarakhita tribe had a Mongolian antecedence. However, most of the time an officer/noble was mentioned as Qarakhita Turk which signifies his being a Turk settled in Qarakhita region.

** Serial number in the description provided by Minhaj in Tabaqat twenty-two (refer to Table 1 & Table 5).

Note: This list is prepared on the basis of the information collected from Minhaj i Siraj Juzjani, *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, translated into English by Major H.G. Raverty, Vol. II.

there was a marked contrast between the life he was spending in his steppe homeland and the life in the service of Sultan. The former was the life of penury whereas the latter peppered with prosperity. The Turkish slave officers who chose to or were forced to serve in India proved their loyalty to their master and their dedication to their adopted country time and again. Fakr-i-Mudabbir writes ‘there is no kind of infidel people which is brought over to Islam and does not look with longing at home, mother, father and kindred: for a time they are bound to adopt Islam, but in most cases they apostatize and relapse into paganism. The exception is the Turkish race, who when they are brought over to Islam, fix their hearts in Islam so firmly that they no longer remember home or region or kin folk……. The Turk is like a pearl that lies in the oyster in the sea. For as long as it is in its habitat, it is devoid of power and worth: but when it emerges from the oyster and from the sea, it acquires value and become precious, decorating the crown of kings and adorning the neck and ear of brides.”[64]

It should however be noted that not all slave officers of Iltutmish were strangers to the life and work culture they found in India. A few of his slaves had already served rulers and persons of high repute. As already mentioned Kabir Khan Ayaz, Nasiruddin Aiyitim and Nusratuddin Tayasa’i were the former slaves of Nasiruddin Husain, Bahauddin Tughril and Mu’izuddin Muhammad Ghori respectively; they were not recently enslaved. Therefore, they must have maintained contacts with their previous work place. They had their own interests as well. Perhaps it was due to his own ambitions that Kabir Khan Ayaz was deprived of his earlier position of eminence. There is also evidence that Iltutmish himself had encouraged his slaves to foster matrimonial alliance and establish social ties with each other. Iltutmish, for instance, married a daughter of Bahauddin Tughril of Bayana to his slave, Tajuddin Arsalan Khan (s. no.19).[65]The Sultan also did not mind recruiting slaves who had family ties with each other. We

know that Nusratuddin Sher Khan (s. no. 23), Saifuddin Aibak Kashli Khan (s. no. 24) and Ulugh Khan Balban (s. no. 26) belonged to the same family (Sher Khan was the cousin of Ulugh Khan Balban & Saifuddin Kashli Khan). They, therefore, formed a small social and political circle within the larger group. Certainly not all the slaves of Iltutmish were socially and locally unconnected.

A study of Table 1 reveals that out of twenty-five maliks whose biography have been furnished by Minhaj, only ten slaves (s. no 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 12, 20), actually held an iqta' during the reign of Iltutmish. Even among these ten slaves, Ikhtiyaruddin Aetkin (s. no. 12) and Izzuddin Balban Kishlu Khan (s. no. 20) were junior ghulams and their rise to power took place at a later period (during the reign of the successors of Iltutmish). The remaining eight nobles namely Tajuddin Sanjar Gajzlak Khan (s. no. 1), Kabir Khan Ayaz (s. no. 2), Nasiruddin Aiyitim (s.no. 3), Saifuddin Aibak Uchch (s. no. 4), Saifuddin Aibak Yughantat (s. no. 5), Nasiruddin Tayasa'i (s. no. 6), Izzuddin Tughril Tughan Khan (s. no. 7), and Ikhtiyaruddin Qaraqash Khan Aetkin (s. no. 10).can be in the real sense called nobles of Iltutmish. These eight officials and Hindu Khan (s. no. 9), who worked as the treasurer of the Empire throughout the reign of the Sultan, were the principal slave-officers of Iltutmish, his bandagan-i-khas. Only these nine officers may be included in the elite corps of the Sultan's noblity. The rest were simply assigned the regular jobs in the imperial household. In fact, a large number of them were purchased during the last phase of the Sultan's reign and therefore, could not win the confidence and the trust of the Sultan. Among the aforementioned nine major officers of Iltutmish, Tajuddin Sanjar Gajzlak Khan, Saifuddin Aibak and Hindu Khan were bought during the governorship of Iltutmish and were the senior-most ghulams of Iltutmish. To this category also belonged Ikhtiyaruddin Qaraqash Khan Aetkin whom Minhaj himself have referred 'as one of the ancient slaves of the

Sultan.'[66] Due to their long association with the Sultan and the training and education they received from him, they cultivated close ties with Iltutmish. When he became the Sultan, they were his natural choice for appointment to crucial and strategic locations. Sunil Kumar has rightly suggested that 'the length of time spent in close association with the Sultan and the nature of his subsequent deployment were two fairly reliable indicators of the seniority of the bandah within Iltutmish's slave corps.'[67] Another factor which worked in favour of these slaves was their upbringing and education as well association with a political elite. The previous experience of Kabir Khan Ayaz, Nasiruddin Aiyitim and Nusratuddin Tayasa'i was therefore certainly instrumental in their rise to power during the reign of Iltutmish.

The iqta's assigned to these senior Turkish slave-officers during the reign of Iltutmish were locations of strategic importance (refer to Table 3). We know that Uchch, Multan, Lahore, Biyana, Bihar, Lakhnauti, were either entrusted to royal princes or these senior slave-officers of Iltutmish. They were the warden of the marches and defended the principal gateways of the Empire of Iltutmish from all directions protected the kingdom from external forces and internal dissension. As far as the north-west areas were concerned, Iltutmish always trusted his Turkish slave-commanders. When the fortress of Uchch was captured in 625 AH/ 1228 AD., it was placed under the charge of Gajzlak Khan.[68] On his death in 629 AH/ 1232 AD., it passed on to the hands of Saifuddin Aibak (s. no. 4) who continued to remain on this post through the end of Iltutmish's reign.[69] Similarly, Multan was entrusted to the charge of Kabir Khan Ayaz in 625 AH/ 1228 AD.[70] When he was removed due to some unknown reasons, another senior Turkish slave-commander Ikhtiyaruddin Qaraqash Khan Aetkin (s. no. 10) was handed over the administration of the province.[71] Nasiruddin Aiyitim was the governor of Lahore when Iltutmish marched Sindh, Uchch and Multan in 625 AH/ 1228 AD and he assisted the Sultan in the

Table 3: Deployment of Turkish slave-officers at various strategic locations/territories of the Sultanate during the reign of Iltutmish.

UCHCH	MULTAN	LAHORE	BIYANA	BIHAR	LAKHNAUTI
Tajuddin Sanjar Gajzlak Khan (1)* ↓ Saifuddin Aibak (4)	Kabir Khan Ayaz (2) ↓ Ikhtiyaruddin Qaraqash Khan Aetkin (10)	Nasiruddin Aiyitim (3)	Nusratuddin Tayasa'i (6)	Saifuddin Aibak Yugantat (5) ↓ Tughril Tughan Khan (7)	Alauddin Jani ** ↓ Saifuddin Aibak Yugantat (5) ↓ Tughril Tughan Khan (7)

*serial number in the description provided by Minhaj in Tabaqat twenty-two (refer to Table 1 & Table 5)

**free-born officer

↓ indicates change of governor

conquest of Multan. The only other nobles who were reported to have been entrusted the command of Lahore during Iltutmish's period were the Sultan's own sons: Prince Nasiruddin Mehmud in 614 AH/ 1217 AD and Ruknuddin Feroz Shah in 632 AH/ 1235 AD,[72] a fact which in itself signify the importance of Lahore. For the territories which were situated in the south of the capital, Biyana and Sultankot (and even Gwalior to which I will come later in this section) Iltutmish again put his faith in one of the members of his elite corps of officials: Nusratuddin Tayasa'i (s. no. 6). The confidence was not misplaced. Throughout the reign of Iltutmish, Aiyitim held that iqta' and remained loyal to the Sultan. He also invaded Kalinjar in 631 AH/ 1233-34 AD and obtained such vast booty in fifty days that the Sultan's share in the khums (war booty) was estimated at twenty five lacs (it is not clear whether the amount was in jital or dirham).[73] Towards the east in Bihar, the rein of administration was in the hands of Saifuddin Aibak Yughantat (s. no. 5) and after his transfer to Lakhnauti, to Tughril Tughan Khan (s. no. 7). Further east in Bengal, the charge was initially entrusted to a free-born noble Alaudddin Jani after the death of Prince Nasiruddin Mahmud in 626 AH/ 1229 AD. However, Alauddin Jani was dismissed soon due to some unspecified reasons. During the remaining period of Iltutmish's reign, the government of Bengal was invariably kept under the command of Turkish slave-officers. From Bihar, Saifuddin Yugantat was transferred to Lakhnauti. Yughantat carried out his duties with great sincerity and remained in office till his death in 631 AH/ 1235 AD. After he passed away, Tughril Tughan Khan once again allowed to put his feet into the shoes of Yugantat like he had done earlier in Bihar. He remained there till the end of Iltutmish's reign. Both these officers did commendable job in these provinces. As mentioned earlier, Yugantat also sent several elephants to the Sultan's capital from Bengal.

The inclusion of Hindu Khan among the senior Shamsi ghulams was indeed surprising. Patronizing a converted Indian at a time when the Sultanate was in its infancy signifies that Iltutmish was not averse to inducting Indians into his nobility. Loyalty and commitment to his cause was the first thing he was looking in his team at this time. Hindu Khan was not only elevated to the post of the Sultanate of Delhi but also continued to serve the Sultan as the tashtdar (ewer- bearer).[74] The appointment of Hindu Khan also evinces that Iltutmish was the first Sultan of Delhi to employ Indians in his government. Thus the process which led to the rise of Imaduddin Raihan during the reign of Nasiruddin Mahmud was initiated during the reign of Iltutmish and culminated with the accession of Nasiruddin Khusrau Khan to the throne of Delhi.

Apart from these nine senior Shamsi officers, only Ikhtiyaruddin Aetkin (s. no. 12) and Izzuddin Balban Kishlu Khan (s. no. 20) held important positions during the reign of Iltutmish. The former governed Kujah and Nandanah in the north-west frontier and the latter controlled Baran. In spite of the fact that they have been assigned iqta' during the reign of Iltutmish, nothing else is known about them. However it can be safely said that these two officers were certainly not among the senior-most Shamsi officers or in the words of Sunil Kumar, bandagan-i-khas. They were not of the stature of the nine mentioned above earlier and rose to high positions during the period of the descendents of Iltutmish. It should however be noted that apart from the twenty-five nobles described by Minhaj in tabaqat twenty-two as bandagan-i-Shamsi, Barani has mentioned the name of few others who belonged to this category; they were Adil Khan, Tamar Khan[75] and Imad ul Mulk Rawat Arz.[76] Minhaj, however, does not mention them in connection with Iltutmish.

The slave-officers did not only work as the muqta' of the provinces. Some of them were also appointed as shahnah (Superintendent). Unlike the muqta' who enjoyed considerable

independent authority, the duties of shahna were limited. He was normally detailed for specific tasks under the direction of the Sultan, an officer through whom the Sultan maintained direct control over certain establishments or crucial functions of the government.[77] As far as the shahnagi of the provinces (or khalisah lands) was concerned, Iltutmish again trusted his senior slave-officers and did not such assignments to the junior ghulams. Nusratuddin Tayasa'i (s. no. 6) became the shahna of Gwalior in addition to his duties as the muqta' of Biyana and Sultankot.[78] Similarly, the charge of the khalisah of Tabarhindah was in the hands of Ikhtiyaruddin Qaraqash Khan Aetkin (s. no. 10), before he moved to Multan as its muqta.' [79] Junior slaves were restricted to the superintendence of lesser posts where they were right under the observation of the ruler or governor and the burden of responsibility was not so great. They were appointed as shahnah of the zarradkhanah of Badaun (Badruddin Sunkar Rumi, s. no. 13), shahnah of the stable (Tajuddin Sanjar Kikluk, s. no. 14), and shahna of rivers and vessels (Tajuddin Sanjar Kuret Khan, s. no. 15). It seems that in imperial household, the shahnas served along with men of equal rank but generally under the command of more authoritative personnel. For instance, the shahna of stable was perhaps subordinate of amir-i-akhur (lord of the stable).

The Sultan also kept his senior slave officers in good humour by bestowing upon them numerous awards and honours. Nasiruddin Aiyitim was, for instance, once awarded with an elephant by Iltutmish[80] which was a rare privilege as it was a royal prerogative to keep an elephant. It perhaps indicates the high regard which the Sultan had for Nasiruddin Aiyitim. On another occasion, we are told, Saifuddin Aibak (s.no. 4) openly expressed his displeasure over the office that was assigned to him by the Sultan.[81] When Iltutmish came to know the source of Aibak's discontent, he gave him a new post of his liking. These incidents clearly demonstrate Iltumish's concern for his bandagan-i-khas. This however does not mean that the Sultan gave

total freedom to his senior ghulams and allowed them to step into his own shoes. Nasiruddin Aiyitim was formerly a slave of Bahauddin Tughril and in all likelihood was aware of the conditions in Biyana and Sultankot. But he was never posted in these territories lest he might not exploit his previous connections with these places and build a local base of power for himself. We also know that when the Sultan recognized Tajuddin Gajzlak Khan's talents, he removed him from the entourage of Prince Nasiruddin Mahmud and took him under his direct care. Iltutmish also did not shy away from taking punitive action against his senior nobles. This is clearly indicated by the way the Sultan removed Kabir Khan Ayaz and Alauddin Jani from their previous position of power. However, unlike Balban, Iltutmish did not go all out against the officers who had lost his confidence. He never tried to eliminate his able nobles. His approach towards them was positive. He tried to channelize their strength and ability in the right direction so as to bring out the best out of them. The nobles in turn served their master with greater zeal and commitment and contributed substantially to the growth of the Empire and the personal strength and glory of their master.

III

Although Iltutmish relied heavily on the efficacy of his senior slave officers, it does not mean that they were his only close associates. The twenty-second tabaqat of Minhaj alludes to, with the exception of Hindu Khan, only the Turkish slave-officers. However, the list of maliks furnished at the conclusion of Iltutmish's reign in Tabaqat twenty-one describes, along with Turkish slave-officers, maliks from diverse racial, ethnic, geographical and social milieu. However, the life and career of several nobles mentioned in Tabaqat twenty-one are difficult to trace. But stray references regarding a few of these nobles by Minhaj elsewhere in this work and

the brief account of some of them by Hasan Nizami help us to prepare life sketches of a host of non-Turkish officers whose names appear in the afore mentioned Tabaqat. The list of grandees in Tabaqat twenty-one contains under the heading 'His (Iltutmish's) Maliks' twenty-one names.[82] This list evinces that of the twenty-one maliks of Iltutmish, two had free status, three were free-born Ghorian maliks, two Khaljis, three old home nobles, two Qutbis, two Nasiri, one Bahai, three Shamsis and three probably immigrant Tajiks (refer to Table 4). Thus a large section of Iltutmish's nobility consisted of immigrant notables whether Tajiks, Ghoris, Khaljis or even Turks who were free-born. We find the remnants of the nobles of previous rulers as well as the slaves of the earlier monarchs also serving the Sultan. The presence of an Indian noble albeit converted to Islam has already been pointed out in the last section. It was certainly a heterogeneous group. Isami tells us that Jamaluddin Yaqut, the Abyssinian was a slave of Iltutmish.[83] The existence of a habshi as the servant of the Sultan indicates their presence in the Delhi Sultanate at this early stage though some of them gained prominence later on. There is little evidence of any Afghan among the slave officers of Iltutmish and it is plausible that they were recruited from Balban's time onwards.

The immigrant nobility shared power with the Turkish slave-officers of Iltutmish. As mentioned above it encompassed people from different region and social group that moved to India for various reasons, the onslaught of the Mongols being the most obvious one. In Table 4, we find two free-status maliks who were connected to the ruling house of Central Asia. Malik Firuz Iltutmish bin Salar has been referred as Prince of Khwarazm. Firuz was related to an aristocratic family of Khwarazm. He was the cousin of Tajuddin Binaltigin, who later became the ruler of Sistan and Nimroz. Though Firuz Iltutmish had connection with Khwarazm Shah his origin can be traced to the tribes of Qipchaq and Qangli (see Appendix B).[84] When the Sultan of

Table 4: List of the prominent officers of Iltutmish with their status/ place of origin

FREE STATUS MALIKS	FREE-BORN GHORIAN MALIKS	KHALJI	OLD HOUSE NOBILITY	QUTBI*	NASIRI**	BAHAI***	SHAMSI****	IMMIGRANT TAJIKS
Firuz Iltutmish b. Salar Alauddin Jani	Qutubuddin Husain Ghori Nasiruddin Madini Shansabani Naseeruddin of Bindar (or Pindar)	Ikhtiyaruddin Daulat Shah Balka Khalji Nasiruddin Mardan Shah Izzuddin Bakhtiyar	Rukunuddin Hamza Abdul Malik Husamuddin Aghulbak Izzuddin Ali Nagori	Izzuddin Tughril Asaduddin Tez Khan	Bahauddin Bulad (Pulad) Kara Sunkar	Nasiruddin Aiyitim (3)*****	Izzuddin Kabir Khan Ayaz (2) Tajuddin Sanjar Gajzlak Khan (1) Nasiruddin (Izz uddin Tughril) Tughan (7)	Ikhtiyaruddin Husain Malikul Umra Iftikharuddin

*slave of Qutubuddin Aibak (d. 1210)

**presumably slave of Nasiruddin Qabacha (d. 1228)

***slave of Bahauddin Tughril

****slave of Shamsuddin Iltutmish (d. 1235)

*****serial number in the description provided by Minhaj in Tabaqat 22 (refer to Table 1 & Table 5)

Note: This list has been prepared on the basis of the information provided by Minhaj i Siraj Juzjani, *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, translated into English by Major H.G. Raverty, Vol. I.

Ghor captured Nishapur, both Tajuddin Binaltigin and Malik Firoz came to Hindustan.[85] Tajuddin Binaltigin later joined the service of Nasiruddin Qabacha from where he went to the service of Khwarazm shah. However, Firuz found a place among the nobility of Iltutmish. Peter Jackson has identified Minhaj's Firuz Iltutmish or Firuz b. Salar with Saifuddin Feroz of Hasan Nizami who is reported to have supported Iltutmish against Sar-i-Jandar Turki.[86] Alauddin Jani has been described as the Prince of Turkistan which indicates his aristocratic background. After the death of Nasiruddin Mahmud, he was assigned the territory of Lakhnauti (for more details, see chapter 3). However, he was soon removed from his post for reasons unknown. During the reign of the Ruknuddin Feroz Shah (d.1236), we find him as the governor of Lahore. Among the free born Ghorian maliks, the name of Qutbuddin Husain Ghori appears prominently. He was seen in the service of Alauddin Utsuz, the son of Alauddin Jahan Soz when Utsuz was ruling over Ghor as the vassal of Khwarazm Shah.[87] He showed great intrepidity during the battle against Tajuddin Yalduz (1214) in the centre of Ghor within the limits of Jarmas.[88] As an officer of the kingom of Ghor under the Khwarazmian, after the fall of Ghorid dynasty, he boldly faced the Mongols in Ghor, defended the fort and even forced them to retreat on two occasions. However, he decided to move to India in 1223 after a series of Mongol attacks on Ghor, Firoz Koh, Ghazni and Tulak.[89] Barani, writes that Qutubuddin Husain was the wakil-i-dar of the court of Iltutmish.[90] He certainly was a distinguished malik and his experience in Ghor held him in good stead. He continued to held high office during the reign of Iltutmish's successors and his position seemed to have been be unaffected by the tides of time. He was the commander of the army during the reign of Raziya (r.1236-40) and led the royal army against the fortress of Ranthambhor which had gone out of the hands of Delhi Sultan after the death of Iltutmish.[91] Perhaps owing to his earlier interaction with Mongols Bahram Shah (r.1240-42) entrusted him

the command of his army against them.[92] Badruddin Sunkar Rumi (s. no. 13), a prominent noble during the reign of Bahram Shah, sought the protection of Qutbuddin Husain Ghori against the Sultan after he was found guilty of sedition.[93] Ghori also worked twice as the na'ib during the reign of Alauddin Ma'sud (r.1242-46) and Nasiruddin Mahmud.[94] He was sent against Ikhtiyaruddin Yuzbak Tughril Khan (s. no. 18) when the latter showed signs of rebellion during the reign of Alauddin Ma'sud Shah.[95] These evidences suggest the high status enjoyed by Qutbuddin Husain Ghori during the early Sultanate period and the respect he had in the eyes of the Sultans of Delhi.

Another Ghorian noble of Iltutmish, Malik Nasiruddin Madini Shansabani as the name suggests belonged to the oldest ruling dynasty of Ghor, the family of Shansab (see Appendix C). His grandfather Shihabuddin Muhammad was the son of Izzuddin Husain and the brother of Alauddin Husain Jahansoz and Bahauddin Sam, father of Mu'izuddin Muhammad Ghori.[96] His full name was Nasiruddin Abu Bikr and his grandfather received the territory of Madin (a tract on one of the confines of Ghor) as his share from his father's dominion. Nasiruddin Abu Bikr was among the maliks of Ghiyasuddin Muhammad of Ghor.[97] During the calamities that befell Ghor and Ghazni on account of the Mongol onslaught, he came to Delhi and presented himself at the Court of Iltutmish.[98] He was received kindly and with honour by the Sultan and other members of the aristocracy. From the list provided in Tabaqat twenty-one, it is evident that he held high rank among the nobles of the Sultan. He died at Delhi in 1223. Another malik of Ghorian lineage, Malik Naseerudddin of Bindar (or Pindar) can be identified with the grandson of Alauddin Husain Jahansoz and son of Alauddin Utsuz, who captured and ruled Ghor after the death of Ghiyasuddin Mahmud (1211). After his father's death, he moved to the fortress of Bindar (or Pindar) in Upper Garjistan (Georgia) and settled there.[99] We do not have any

information about him till the reign of Iltutmish when he appeared as the malik of the Sultan. Probably the ravages caused by the men of Chengiz Khan also forced him to take refuge in the safe haven of Delhi. He was styled as Chaush (pursuivant) which indicates that he was an army man. During the reign of Alauddin Mas'ud Shah he once had a tussle with the governor of Lahore, Ikhtiyaruddin Yuzbak Tughril Khan (s. no. 18).[100]

Khaljis also formed a section of Iltutmish's nobility; one of them was Balka Khalji. Awfi informs that he held no important position in Bengal prior to its conquest by Prince Nasiruddin Mahmud (d.1229). However, Iltutmish favoured him and allowed him to rule over a vast territory in that province as his vassal under the title Daulat Shah.[101] He continued to remain loyal till 1229 when the sudden demise of Nasiruddin Mahmud encouraged him to rebel against the authority of the Sultan. (For more details about him, see chapter 3). Nasiruddin Mardan Shah was perhaps another Khalji noble of the Sultan. The similarity of his name with Ali Mardan Shah Khalji and the addition of Khalji with his name in one of the copies of Tabaqat,[102] points to the fact that Nasiruddin Mardan Shah was a Khalji malik. He can be identified with Naseeruddin Mardan Shah of Hasan Nizami who assisted Iltutmish against Sar-i- Jandar Turki and later accompanied him to the Jalor campaign.[103] Another Khalji noble of Iltutmish mentioned by Minhaj in Tabaqat twenty-one was Izzuddin Bakhtiyar Khalji. Raverty's opinion that Minhaj has perhaps confused him with Muhammad Bakhtiyar Khalji, the conqueror of Bihar and Lakhnauti, is incorrect. Bakhtiyar had already died five years before Iltutmish was elevated to the throne of Delhi. The truth is that Izzuddin Bakhtiyar was, like Nasiruddin Mardan Shah, among those Turkish officers who had supported Iltutmish against Sar-i-Jandar; he had also participated in Jalor expedition. Both Izzuddin and Nasiruddin Mardan Shah were expert archers. Early relationship with the Sultan and their skill might have contributed to their rise to power. An

epitaph found near Mahrauli where Izzuddin lies buried after his death in 1219 suggests that he held the rank of Sipahsalar (commander) of the *hashm-i-qalb* (the centre of the royal army). The qasida composed by Siraji in his praise sometime before 1219 informs us that the name of Malik Izzuddin Bakhtiyar was Ahmad and that the king had raised him over and above all the maliks in his service. Therefore, he had the privilege of commanding the Sultan's army on the battlefield.[104] The Khaljis, thus, enjoyed influential position during the time of Iltutmish.

Many officers who had served Muhammad Ghori and Qutbuddin Aibak were also patronized by Iltutmish. Ruknuddin Hamza Abdul Malik was, for instance, among the maliks of Muhammad Ghori. He was present in the battle of Tarain and was later sent by Mu'izuddin as his envoy to the court of Prithviraj Chauhan at Ajmer.[105] He was highly praised by Hasan Nizami for his wisdom and intelligence. Later when Aibak was managing the affairs in India as one of the many commanders of Mu'izuddin, Ruknuddin Hamza held the office of the chief Sadr.[106] He evidently continued to be a part of the administration up to the time of Iltutmish. Hasan Nizami counts him among the functionaries of the state and nobles of the court who had helped Iltutmish in Jalore campaign along with Izzuddin Bakhtiyar, Nasiruddin Mardan Shah, Naseeruddin Ali and Badruddin Sanqar Tigin.[107] In the same vein, Izzuddin Ali and Husamuddin Aghulbak who were in charge of Nagore and Awadh respectively when Muhammad Bakhtiyar Khalji was moving towards Bengal,[108]were also in retinue of the Sultan. However, their tenure of office is not known for during the reign of Aibak, Awadh was under Qaemaz Rumi.[109] Subsequently Nasiruddin Mahmud held the fief of Awadh. Similarly, when Firuz Iltutmish and Tajuddin Binaltigin came to India after Mongol invasion, Nagore was under the charge of Karimuddin Hamza.[110] Though several Muizzi amirs served Iltutmish, many more were not are not heard of after the elevation of the latter to the throne. Peter Jackson has for instance pointed out that

Mu'izzi amirs found by Fakhr-i-Mudabbir among Aibak's entourage at Lahore (1206) namely sipahsalars Husamuddin Ahmad Ali Shah, Mubarizuddin Tughritegin, Ali Hasan Ulugh dadbeg, Asaduddin Ali Mohammad Abul Hasan Ulugh dadbeg, vanished thereafter.[111] Perhaps this was due to their support of Aram Shah in the ensuing contest for the throne.

Many slave officers of Iltutmish's predecessors as well as his contemporaries also find place in the list of his nobles. We know that Izzuddin Tughril and Asaduddin Tez Khan had been in the service of Qutbuddin Aibak while Bahauddin Pulad and Kara Sunkar had served Nasiruddin Qabacha.[112] Nasiruddin Aiyitim, the slave of Bahauddin Tughril, Izzuddin Kabir Khan Ayaz, Tajuddin Sanjar Gajzlak Khan and Nasiruddin Tughan (Izzuddin Tughril Tughan) can also be placed in this category.[113] As mentioned above (section II of this chapter), Minhaj has furnished the biographical sketch of the last four slave officers in Tabaqat twenty-two. We do not have any other information regarding the Qutbi officers. Kara Sunkar is also not heard of anywhere else. However, Bahauddin Bulad (Pulad) has been mentioned in connection with Prince Nasiruddin Mahmud's expedition to Lakhnauti where he has been described as Pulan instead of Bulad (Pulad). When Nasiruddin Mahmud marched from Awadh to Lakhnauti (1227) against Husamuddin Iwaz Khalji, Malik Pulan (Pulad) was among those distinguished officers who were ordered by Iltutmish to accompany the prince to Lakhnauti.[114] Ikhtiyaruddin Husain and Malik ul umra Iftikharuddin were seemingly two Tajik amirs mentioned in this list (Tabaqat twenty-one). Iftikharuddin can be identified with Iftikharuddin Muhammad Umar who, according to Hasan Nizami, had supported the Sultan in the struggle against Aram Shah.[115] Minhaj has addressed him as the Amir of Karah.

Iltutmish's nobility was therefore drawn from diverse sections of the society and did not constitute only his slave-officers. It goes without saying that the biographical sketch of nobles

available in twenty-second Tabaqat does not present a true picture of the composition of the early Sultanate nobility. As shown above, Iltutmish inducted not only Turkish slave-officers but people belonging to different ethnic and racial background into his nobility. This strategy enabled the Sultan to maintain a balance among various groups in the nobility and allowed him maximum freedom of action. It was a system of check and balance where none of the ethnic and racial groups could form a majority and grow powerful. If the Turkish slave-officers looked after the administration of the provinces and strategic locations, the non-Turks ruled the roost at the centre. For instance, Nizamul Mulk Junaidi and Fakrul Mulk Isami, the wazirs of Iltutmish, were non-Turks. Fakrul Mulk Isami had in fact, held high offices for thirty years at the court of Baghdad. As mentioned earlier, Malik Qutbuddin Ali Ghori was Wakil-i-Dar. Another Ghori malik, Izzuddin Salari held the position of Barbak.[116] During the campaign against Uchch (1228) he was styled as Amir-i-Hajib (Lord Chamberlin) by Minhaj himself.[117] Tajul Mulk Muhammad was Dabir and Mushrif-i-mamlik. One Ziyauddin Junaidi was styled by Minhaj as Majd ul Umra (the glorious noble). He was elevated to the post of Amir-i-dad after the Gwalior campaign (1232-33).[118] In the same campaign we find one Rashiduddin Ali working as the sipahsalar (commander of the troops); he was later directed to assume the office of seneschal **(**probably, in charge of domestic arrangements and the administration of servants**)** after the battle. We also find Ain ul Mulk Husain-i-Ash'ari, the erstwhile Wazir of Qabacha, holding the post of the tutor or guardian (the word used is wazir) of Prince Ruknuddin Firuz in 1228 at the appointment as the governor of Badaun.[119] Like Minhaj and Awfi, Husain-i-Ash'ari had also shifted his loyalty to Iltumish after the fall of Qabacha. Besides, we have persons like Nizamuddin Shafurqani and Rashiduddin Maiqani,[120] who, according to Peter Jackson, were men seemingly from Khurasan.[121] Another noble, Muidul Mulk Muhammad Husna was praised by Hasan Nizami in

glowing terms for his sound judgment and efficient administration. It can therefore be safely suggested that Iltutmish presided over a nobility that comprised of both the slave and free-born element. The free-born elements were basically drawn from the immigrants who came to India on account of the Mongol onslaught on Central Asia. He was the first Sultan of Delhi who introduced foreign element in the nobility. Hasan Nizami stresses the Turkish origin of Aibak, but he calls Iltutmish as Sultan-i-Turk-u-Ajam[122] underscoring both the Turkish and non-Turkish character of his state.

The character of Sultanate nobility has been a subject of debate among scholars. While for some the nobility was feudal in character, others highlight its bureaucratic features. In fact, it was neither feudal in the European sense nor was it bureaucratic in the modern sense of the term. It contained some features of both. It is true that nobles were given iqta both as administrative unit as well as land revenue assignment but they could not convert it into their private property and hold it as the bastion of their power. They held it at the pleasure of the ruler. They looked after the administration of the territory as muqta' (See chapter 4) or drew their salary from there but could not assert hereditary claim over it. Feudalism, it is said, is symptomatic of the weakness of the central government. In India, on the other hand, the nobility owed its position not because of the weakness but the strength of the crown.[123] The crown was the fountain head of sovereignty from where the power poured down to its officers. Once an office got vacated an account of death/dismissal of an official, it was replaced by another officer of almost equal ability. The nobility of Iltutmish therefore cannot be characterized as feudal given the fact that the officials did not have any right on the land they held.[124] However, we find significant elements of bureaucratic organization in Iltutmish's administration. The Sultan selected his officers not on the basis of a written examination but on the basis of their talents and merit. After

recruitment they were put to training in various offices in the royal house-hold and even during hunting expeditions. Following the completion of training, the new recruits were given their first administrative assignment. They were transferred frequently from one administrative unit to another. They were also demoted when they failed to perform their duty well. But in keeping with the medieval system of governance, experienced and efficient nobles were directly assigned a province or a senior position. Many officers were allowed to retain a particular office throughout their lifetime. Hindu Khan, for instance, held the post of treasurer throughout the reign of Iltutmish; Junaidi also served him for a long time.

IV

An oft-debated issue related to the nobility of Iltutmish is the question of Turk-i-Chihilgani. The meaning of this term is itself obscure. Modern historians have given assorted interpretations of this term owing perhaps to the ambiguous manner in which the term has been discussed in the primary sources. A. B. M. Habibullah writes that 'a large progeny was not favourable to a king's interests, while a number of tried and efficient slaves having no other interest than to serve the master's family, was a sure asset. Iltutmish had no illusions about the capacity of his sons and the only way to counteract the opposite tendency seemed to lie in organizing his personal retainers into a party who would stand by his family and thereby uphold its absolutist monarchy. Like the Mu'izzi and Qutbi slaves, the Shamsi slaves were thus allowed to form themselves into a political group which, after his death received the collective name of the 'forty'. By absorbing or destroying the adherents of former kings they were enabled to reign supreme after his death…Thus there came into being a curious phenomenon, a party of bondsmen pledged to support the power of the master's family who considered the state a vast household in which the outsiders could have no place. The Sultanate was converted into a kind

of household polity.'[125] He is thus of the opinion that the Chihilgani was the result of Iltutmish's desire to preserve kingship in his own dynasty. Later, during the period of his successors, they started managing the state on behalf of Iltutmish's heirs and regarded themselves as the sole custodian of the empire of Iltutmish. K.A.Nizami opines that it was probably the growing assertion of Indian elements in the body politic which led the Turkish maliks to organize themselves into a corporate body known as Chihilgani.[126] Khurram Qadir is perhaps most imaginative of all. He suggests that 'Iltutmish had four Qazis, two wazirs, twenty-one amirs and ten offspring. If one were to include the three Mu'izzi (slave) contenders for the throne of Aram Shah, the list of individuals thus involved in the power struggle during Iltutmish's reign comes to forty. This may be another source for the tradition of identifying the Chihilgani as the cause of and culprits for the political turmoil during the Ilbari rule.'[127] Qadir's theory is not tenable. He has failed to realize that the power-struggle of Turk-i-Chihilgani began after the death of Iltutmish and not during his reign. Peter Jackson has come up with a totally new theory on this issue. He writes that only on one occasion in his account of Iltutmish's nobility has Barani referred to 'the forty' (Chihil) but on every other occasion the chronicler has used the distributive numeral which suggests that each of the chihilganis commanded a corps of forty mamluks.[128] His predilection for comparing Indian nobility with that of Egypt has perhaps led to this assumption. He compared Turk-i-Chihilgani with 'Amir Tablkhana' of Egypt; amirs commanding units of forty royal mamluks. As the theory suggests, commanders were not actually forty in number. Like Gavin Hambly (see below), Peter Jackson holds that Barani has alluded to only three amirs as Chihilganis: Ulugh Khan Balban, his cousin Sher Khan and Tamar Khan (muqta' of Sunam and Samana after Sher Khan's death). However, it is highly unlikely that Minhaj who has provided a detailed biographical sketch of the first two nobles would not have mentioned this

fact had it been so. If there were nobles who controlled forty slaves, it would have definitely been brought to the notice of the readers by the contemporary historians. Sunil Kumar linkes chihilgani with an elite cadre within the bandagan-i-Shamsi and calls it bandagan-i-khas. He describes them as ‘a group of slaves, trusted and commended for their action, raised above others by Shamsuddin Iltutmish and manumitted as a reward for their service.’[129] This theory is definitely not in keeping with the definition of Chihilgani provided by Barani (see below) who clearly writes that Chihilganis were at first the less-recognized Shamsi ghulams. This misunderstanding has probably convinced Sunil Kumar to suggest that Barani has wrongly mentioned Balban as a member of this group. Irfan Habib also talks about the forty slaves but suggests that it is not necessary to cavil at the number forty.[130]

Gavin Hambly was perhaps the first scholar to examine this issue. Though he did not reach a definite conclusion, he certainly raised some pertinent questions. Hambly suggests that it might be an ‘expression of opprobrium’, probably a popular nickname, bandied on the streets of the capital but not on the lips of those associated with the ruling elite.[131] He also suggests that they might be forty Shamsi slaves who were all manumitted at the same time on a momentous occasion long remembered by the inhabitants of Delhi and therefore, the sobriquet Chihilgani was still fresh and in circulation during the lifetime of Barani. He also opines that Barani’s Chihilgani might not be a group of forty slaves and that the term may have been used merely in the Biblical sense of meaning a large number.[132] He draws attention to the fact that Barani has mentioned only three amirs belonging to the Chihilgani: Balban, Sher Khan and Tamar Khan. He is also suggests that Barani has probably confused Tamar Khan of Balban’s reign with the Shamsi malik Tamar Khan-i-Qiran (s. no. 8), governor of Awadh who died in 1246. However, all

of Hambly's views are in the realm of speculation and nothing concrete and conclusive can be drawn from his article.

Among the contemporary historians, Barani is the only one who has mentioned about the Corps of Forty. Though *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi* begins with the reign of Balban, the author has included a few remarks about the predecessors of Balban as well. Writing about them he writes that 'After the death of Iltutmish…in the period of thirty years when the reins of the Empire was in the hands of his progeny…the fortune of the Sultanate and its means were divided among the Turkish slaves of Iltutmish [Shamsi slaves] who have now become Khans…All [the successors of Iltutmish] were young and of tender years and they lack the strength to endure the burden of responsibility of dominion…consequently, during their period of sovereignty, the Turkish ghulams who were pronounced as 'Chihilgani' established their sway over the affairs of the entire kingdom and they [the Turkish slaves] became personalities or figures of potency and consequence.'[133] From Barani onwards, this term has been used by later historians. Ferishta tells us that in the reign of Shamsuddin Iltutmish, forty of his Turkish slaves who were in great favour, entered into a solemn covenant to support each other, and on the King's death to divide the empire among them.[134] Similarly, Nizamuddin Ahmad writes that Sultan Shamsuddin had forty Turkish slaves, every one of whom attained the rank of an Amir and the whole body of them was known as Chihilgani.[135] Evidently, both Ferishta and Nizamuddin Ahmad had taken this information from Barani. However, the two chief contemporary historians of the thirteenth century, Hasan Nizami and Minhaj us Siraj do not even mention this term 'Chihilgani' in their work. It is also worth noting that in his biographical sketch, of the two nobles identified by Barani as the members of the Chihilgani team, Minhaj has not used the word Chihilgani. Fakr-i-Mudabbir is also silent over this issue.

If we analyze this term 'Chihilgani', we find that it is comprised of two words: chihil and gani. Chihil means forty and gani, an infamous boy (a derogatory term). Therefore, Turk-i-Chihilgani signifies the infamous forty Turks. We also know that 'chihil' does not just means 'forty'. It is also used in the sense of 'a large number' or 'several'. Centipede is known as *chihilpai* when it actually has many legs and not exactly forty. *Chihil-chirag* referrers to a candelabrum, a large branched candlestick or holder for several candles or lamps. In the same vein, *Chihil Qadmi* means walk, not exactly forty steps. It also denotes the Muslim practice of stepping back forty paces from the grave at the time of funeral and then advancing towards it before the formal completion of service. Here also the steps taken are not strictly forty. That in historical works the term 'chihil' was used in the sense of 'many' or 'several' can be ascertained from the fact that Isami at one place has written that there was a group of forty (chihil) Turkish slaves who were asked to stand in a line and were presented to the king [Iltutmish].[136] Balban was one of them. Writing about the same event, Ibn-i-Battuta observes that the number of slaves brought before the Sultan was hundred.[137] The difference in the number of slave enumerated by Isami and Ibn-i-Battuta indicate that both meant 'many' or 'a large number' of slaves and did not specify an exact number of slaves. If we look at the usage of Chihilgani from this angle, we can say that the confusion is not so confounding. If chihil denotes 'many', or 'a large number', then Barani's narrative becomes much clearer. Except on one occasion,[138] Barani's application of the term indicates that he was talking about a particular group of nobles who rose to prominence after the death of Iltutmish. They may or may not have been forty. Moreover, Barani has clearly mentioned that he was talking about the developments that took place in the post Iltutmish period (thirty years rule of the successors of Iltutmish) and not immediately after the death of Iltutmish.

The term seems to have been used in a derogatory sense, which probably gained currency when the Turkish domination in the administration came to an end, and was perhaps used to describe the upheaval and massacre caused by them in an earlier period. Since there were not one but many such stories of rapine and plunder in this period of chaos (1236-66), those who were responsible were collectively tagged as *Turk-i- Chihilgani*. As this term was not in vogue during the thirteenth century, Minhaj and others have not mentioned it in their accounts. Barani also says that 'during the period of Sultan Shamsuddin, on account of the murder and bloodshed caused by Chengiz Khan, fear gripped them and the renowned maliks and umara, who were chiefs for a long time, and a number of wazirs and famous people (notables) came and appended themselves to the Court of Sultan Shamsuddin Iltutmish. In the presence of those maliks who can be classified as rarities and those wazirs and celebrated people unrivalled in nobility, liberty, sublime race, and unparalleled in wisdom, learning and skill in the entire world – the court of Iltutmish rivaled that of (Sultan) Mahmud and (Sultan) Sanjar and acquired great prestige. After the death of Iltutmish, his chihilgani Turkish slaves (Bandagan-i-Turk-i-Chihilgani) succeeded in fulfilling their ambitions. The Sultan's own sons did not come out (did not behave) as the princes must and should and they could not carry out the duties of kingship - a duty which is next only to Prophethood in term of greatness and magnificence. Due to the ascendency and assault of the Turkish slaves of Shamsuddin (Bandagan-i-Turk-i-Shamsi), all the nobles and sons of nobles whose ancestors and forefathers were maliks and sons of maliks and wazirs and sons of wazirs were destroyed on various pretexts during the reign of the sons of the Sultan who did not have inkling about the worldly affairs. After the destruction of those chiefs, the Shamsi slaves rose and became khans. Each of them established his own court, palace and insignia of royalty…Till

the time the nobles and generals do not fall from their position, the slaves and unworthy can neither rise nor became generals.'[139]

Barani further writes that 'as the bandagan-i-Shamsi were the slaves of one master (Khwajahtash) and all the forty reached the exalted position at the same time, they do not obey or submit to each other, bow to another and in (obtaining) iqta', army and rank of honour all of them demanded equality and parity…Each say to the other, who are you that I am not and what thou are that I can't be. As a result of the incompetence of the successors of Iltutmish and the dominance of the slaves of Iltutmish, the monarchy had forfeited all majesty.'[140] From this extract of Barani, certain characteristic of his Turk-i-Chihilgani can be ascertained. It seems that these nobles were less-recognized Turkish slaves of Iltutmish and were alive when the Sultan died. They gained ascendancy during the period of his successors, killed free-born nobles and dignitaries, became khans, assumed a luxurious lifestyle, controlled Iltutmish's successors and each one of them considered himself at par with the other. Although their cause was common yet they fiercely fought with one another in sharing the spoils of the state. In fact most of the Shamsi slave-officers displayed the traits that Barani associates with Turk-i-Chihilgani. From Table 5, it is clear that most of the maliks who can be called Iltutmish's prominent slave officers were either dead or died soon after the conclusion of Iltutmish's reign. Tajuddin Gajzlak Khan (s. no. 1), Nasiruddin Aiyitim (s. no. 3), Saifuddin Yughantat (s. no. 5) were already dead before the end of Iltutmish's rule. Saifuddin Aibak-i-Uchch (s. no. 4), Nasiruddin Tayasa'i (s. no. 5) and Hindu Khan (s. no. 9) died soon after and till the time they remained alive, they remained completely indifferent to the confusion prevailing at the centre after the death of Iltutmish. Most members of his elite corps did not even bear the title of 'Khan'. Therefore, there is little chance that they can be a member of Turk-i-Chihilgani. Among the other three prominent maliks of Iltutmish who

Table 5: List of the twenty-five Shamsi Maliks and their position during 1236-66

S. No.	NAME OF THE SHAMSI OFFICE	ALLOCATION AT THE TIME OF THE DEATH OF ILTUTMISH (d. 633/1236)	ASSIGNMENT DURING THE PERIOD OF					WHETHER INCLUDED IN THE LIST OF NASIRUDDIN MAHMUD'S PROMINENT MALIKS
			RUKN UDDIN FEROZ (d. 634/ 1237)	RAZIYA (d. 638/ 1240)	MU'IZZUDDIN BAHRAM SHAH (d. 639/ 1242)	ALAUDDIN MAS'UD SHAH (d. 644/ 1246)	NASIRUDDIN MAHMUD (d. 665/ 1266)	
1.	Tajuddin Sanjar-i- Gajzlak Khan	Died in 629 AH/ 1231-32 AD as the Governor of Uchch						
2.	Izzuddin Kabir Khan Ayaz i-Hazar Mardan ul Mui'zzi	Governor of Palwal	District of Sunam	Lahore→ rebelled→Multan	Assumed sovereignty in the territory of Sindh and captured Uchch. Died in 639AH/1241 AD			
3.	Nasiruddin Aiyitim ul Bahai	Died during an expedition against Bundi while serving in Ajmer						
4.	Saifuddin Aibak-i- Uchch	Governor of Uchch	Uchch	Died as the muqta of Uchch				

5.	Saifuddin Aibak-i-Yughantat	Died in 631 AH/ 1234 AD as the Governor of Lakhnauti						
6.	Nusratuddin Tayasa'i	Biyana, Sultanate and Shahnagi of Gwalior	Same?*	Awadh. Died soon after				
7.	Izzuddin Tughril-i- Tughan Khan	Lakhnauti	Same?	Same? declared his independence	Same?	lost Lakhnauti to Tamur Khan Qiran → Awadh (643/1245)	Died in 644AH/1246 AD	Yes
8.	Qamaruddin Qiran-i-Tamur Khan as Sultani	Amir-i-Akhur	Same?	Kannauj→ Karah→ Awadh (after the death of Nusratuddin Tayasa'i)	continued as feudatory of Awadh	captured Lakhnauti from Tughril Tughan Khan	Died in 644AH/ 1246 AD	Yes
9.	Hindu Khan, Mu'ayyid uddin Mihtar-i- Mubrak al Khazin as Sultani	Treasurer + Tashtdar	Same?	Fortress of Uchch	Jalandhar. Died there			
10.	Ikhtiyaruddin Qaraqash Khan-i-Aetkin	fief of Multan	Same?	Lahore	lost Lahore to Mongols→ Biyana→ imprisoned in Delhi along with Ikhtiyaruddin Yuzbak	Amir-i-Hajib→ Biyana→ Karah	Killed in Karah in 644AH/1246 AD	Yes

11	Ikhtiyaruddin Altunia	Sar Chatardar	Same?	Baran→ Tabarhindah→ rebelled→ married Raziya. Died in 638AH/1240 AD				
12.	Ikhtiyaruddin Aetkin	Kujah and Nandanah	Probably the same	Badaun→ Amir-i-Hajib	**Naibor (???)** lieutenant of the Sultan. Murdered in 638AH/ 1241AD			
13	Badruddin Sunkar Rumi	Amir-i-Akhur	Same?	Badaun	Amir-i-Hajib (after the assassination of Ikhtiyaruddin Aetkin)→ rebelled, back to Badaun→ died in confinement in Delhi in 639AH/ 1241-42 AD			
14	Tajuddin Sanjar-i-Kikluk	Shahnah of the Stable	Same?	Baran→ Sarsuti	Same?	Badaun→ murdered		
15	Tajudddin Sanjar-i-Kuret Khan	Shahnah of rivers and vessels	Same?	Same?	Same?	Rebelled against Muhazzabuddin, the wazir→ Shahnah of the elephants→ Sar-i-Jandar→ Badaun→ Awadh. Killed while fighting in Bihar		Yes

16	Saifuddin Bat Khan-i-Aibak, the Khitai	Sar-i-Jamadar	Same?	Same?	Same?	Sar-i-Jandar→ Kuhram and Samana→ Baran	Wakil-i-Dar (after the fall of Raihan). Died in 655 AH/ 1257 AD during Santur expedition	Yes
17	Tajuddin Sanjar-i-Tez Khan	?	?	?	Amir-i-Akhur	Same?	Naib Amir-i-Hajib→ Jhanjhanah→ Kashmandi and Mandianah (when Ulugh Khan moved to Nagore→ Baran (when Ulugh Khan returned to the Court)→ Wakil-i-dar and muqti of Badaun (probably after Bat Khan Aibak's death)→ Awadh	Yes
18.	Ikhtiyaruddin Yuzbak-i-Tughril Khan	Naib Chashnigir	Amir-i-Majlis→ Shahnagi of the elephants	Amir-i-Akhur	Same? Imprisoned in 639AH/ 1241 AD along with Ikhtiyaruddin Qaraqash Khan	Tabarhindah→ Lahore→ Kannauj	Awadh→ Lakhnauti declared his independence and took the title of Mughisuddin. Killed during the Kamrud campaign	Yes

19.	Tajuddin Arsalan Khan, Sanjar-i-Chast	Jamahdar	Same?	Chasnigir	Same?	Same?	Biyana→ Wakil-i-dar→ Tabarhindah in 651 AH/ 1253 AD (after it was recovered from the dependents of Sher Khan)→ Awadh→ Karah in 657 AH/ 1259 AD→ seized Lakhnauti	Yes
20.	Izzuddddin Balban-i-Kishlu Khan as Sultani Shamsi	Baran	Same?→ rebelled	? captured and imprisoned→ honoured	? honoured→ rebelled	proclaimed himself the Sultan→ submitted to Alauddin Mas'ud→ Nagore→ Multan along with Nagore	Same?→ Uchch along with Multan→ lost Multan to Qarlughs→ lost Uchch to Sher Khan → Badaun→ Uchch & Multan again (after Sher Khan proceeded to Turkistan and Ulugh Khan was exiled)→asked for Mongol assistance after Ulugh Khan returned to the Court→ allied with Qutlugh Khan against Ulugh Khan→ retained Uchch→ dispatched his	Yes

							agents to the Royal Court in 658 AH/ 1260 AD	
21.	Nusrat Khan, Badruddin Sunkar-i-Sufi, the Rumi	?	?	?	?	Amir of Kol	Territory of Biyana→ Tabarhindah, Sunam, Jhajhar Lakhwal and frontiers till the ferries over the river Beas (when Sher Khan moved to Biyana)	
22.	Saifuddin Aibak, the Dad beg, the Shamsi Ajami	?	?	Sahm ul Hasham	Amir-i-Dad of Karah	Amir-i-Dad of Delhi in 640 AH/1242-43 AD with the fiefs of Amir-i Dad and the bench being passed over to him	Iqta of Palwal and Kamah in Bharatpur with bench of judgeship→ Baran→ Karsak with office of Chief Justicey→ Baran (again)	
23.	Nusratuddin Sher Khan, Sunkar-i-**Saghalsus (**????)	?	?	?	?	Tabarhindah (when he was moving towards Lahore to fight the Mongols who were at the walls of Uchch)	captured Multan from Qarlughs and placed his chief, Kurez at that place (648 AH/1250 AD)→ wrested Uchch from Balban Kishlu Khan (649 AH/1251AD)→ conflict with Ulugh Khan (651AH/1254 AD)→ went to Turkistan→	Yes

							returned, tried to support Ma'sud Shah, son of Iltutmish→ altercation with Arsalan Khan for Tabarhindah which he finally got → territory of Kol, Biyana, Balaram, Jalisar, Baltarah, Mihir and Mahawan and fortress of Gwalior (657 AH/ 1259 AD)	
24.	Saifuddin Aibak-i-Kashli Khan as Sultani	?	?	Naib Sar-i-Jandar	Sar-i-Jandar	Amir-i-Akhur	Amir-i-Hajib (647AH/1249 AD) along with fief of Nagore (when it was taken back from Balban Kishlu Khan)→ Karah (when Ulugh Khan Balban moved to Nagore)→ Amir-i-Hajib (again, when Ulugh Khan returned)→ city of Meerut to mountains of Bandiaram (in 653AH/1255 AD, on the death of Qutbuddin Husain Ghori)→ Died in 657AH/ 1259-60 AD	Yes

25.	Al Khakan al Mua'zzam al A'zam, Baha ul Haq wa uddin, Ulugh Khan-i-Balban as Sultani	Khasahdar	khasahdar	Same?→ Amir-i-Shikar	Amir-i-Akhur→ fief of Riwari (when Badruddin Sunkar Rumi became Amir-i-Hajib)→ participated in coup against Mu'izuddin Bahram Shah	Iqta of Hansi→ Amir-i-Hajib (642 AH/ 1244-45 AD)	Amir-i-Hajib→ Naib-i-mamlakat + title of Ulugh Khan (647AH/1249 AD)→Hansi (650 AH/1252AD, deposed)→ Nagore (651 AH/1253 AD when Raihan became wakil-i-dar)→ returned to power in 652 AH/1254 AD (Raihan sent to Badaun)→ death of Raihan and conflict with Qutlugh Khan and Balban Kishlu Khan→ Sultan of Delhi (664 AH/1266AD)	Yes

→ Indicates change in assignment

Same? Probably the same (as there was no information about the change in the assignment/ office).

? No information

Note: This table is prepared on the basis of the information furnished by Minhaj i Siraj Juzjani, *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, translated into English by Major H.G. Raverty, Vol. II.

held the title Khan and survived several years after their master's death were Tughril Tughan Khan (s. no. 7), Qaraqash Khan Aetkin (s. no. 10) and Kabir Khan Ayaz (s. no. 2). Izzuddin Tughril Tughan Khan (s. no. 7) was virtually independent in Lakhnauti but remained aloof from the politics of the centre. Moreover, he already held an exalted position during the reign of Iltutmish and did not acquire it later on. Similarly, Ikhtiyaruddin Qaraqash Khan Aetkin (s. no. 10) was also an influential noble and there is no report of any problem caused by him in the post-Iltutmish era. Only Kabir Khan Ayaz (s. no. 3) rebelled and that too immediately after the death of Iltutmish. But he could not be called a member of Turk-i- Chihilgani as he had revolted was in connivance with some free-born nobles and not against them.[141] However, the junior slaves of Iltutmish gained ascendancy after his demise as can be ascertained from Table 5. The officer placed on serial number 8 and those from serial number 11 onwards all received major assignments during the period of the successors of Iltutmish (See Table 5). None of these maliks find place in the list of the maliks of Iltutmish given at the end of the chapter on Sultan Iltutmish (Tabaqat twenty-one). However, by the time of Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud, most of these lesser known slaves are included in the list of the prominent maliks of his reign.[142]

It can therefore be safely concluded that the post Iltutmish period witnessed the rise of these maliks to prominence. It is also noteworthy that with a few exceptions, all those who survived Iltutmish and whose biographical sketches are provided by Minhaj (in Tabaqat twenty-two) held the title of Khan. Since Iltutmish had seldom bestowed this title upon his senior and principal slave-officers, the chances of junior slaves receiving this title from the Sultan are very remote. Most of them received it during the period of their dominance. For instance Balban (s. no. 25) received the title of Ulugh Khan from Nasiruddin Mahmud on 3rd Rajab, 647 AH/ 12th October, 1249 AD,[143] Badruddin Sunkar Sufi (s. no. 21) was styled as Nusrat Khan in 657 AH/

1258 AD.[144] The growing influence of these officers and their role in Ulugh Khan's rise to power might have motivated Minhaj to write their short biographies. Many of these officers were subsequently involved in the killing of the Tajiks and other free-born immigrant nobility. The first such event took place in the vicinity of Tarain and Mansurpur immediately after the death of Iltutmish and led to the murder of Taj ul Mulk Mahmud, Bahauddin Husain-i-Ashari, Karimuddin Zahid, Ziya ul Mulk (son of Nizamul Mulk Junaidi), Nizamuddin Shafurqani, Khwajah Rashiduddin Maikani and Amir Fakruddin many other Tajik officers.[145] A close study of *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri* reveals that the lesser-known ghulams of Iltutmish, Ikhtiyaruddin Yuzbak Tughril Khan (s. no. 18) and Balban-i-Kishlu Khan (s. no. 20) were the ringleaders in this massacre.[146] Balban Kishlu Khan was also involved in spearheading the coupe against Mu'izuddin Bahram Shah.[147] Both these officers were subsequently accused of acting in an independent manner. Yuzbak rebelled at Lahore, then at Kannanj. Later when Lakhnauti was assigned to him, he assumed three canopies of state- red, black and white, attacked Awadh, had the Khutbah read in his name and styled himself Mughisuddin.[148] Balban Kishlu Khan also demonstrated his lack of awe and respect for the central government on many occasions. He even sent an embassy to Halaku, the Mongol Khan, in open defiance of the central authority.[149] Shortly after this he threw the yoke of the Sultan and, along with Qutlugh Khan, advanced up to Bagh-i-Jud in the vicinity of Delhi (1257).[150] His continuous strife with Nusratuddin Sher Khan (s. no. 23) and Ulugh Khan Balban (s. no. 25) is well-known.

Minhaj also informs that during the reign of Alauddin Ma'sud Shah (d. 1246), wazir Muhazzabuddin, a Tajik, was killed (28th October, 1242) by Turkish amirs for displaying insignias of royalty.[151] This dastardly act was committed by Tajuddin Sanjar Kuret Khan (s. no. 15) and Nusrat Khan Badruddin Sunkar Sufi (s. no. 21).[152] Both of them were awarded with

higher positions after the incident. In the same vein, Ulugh Khan Balban (s. no. 25) took active part in the downfall of Sultan Mu'izuddin Bahram Shah.[153] After assuming the charge of Naib (1249), he virtually took the entire administration in his own hand. Isami writes that Balban had acquired a white parasol from the Sultan by a trick.[154] He was also involved in the assassination of Qutbuddin Husain Ghori, the prominent Shamsi malik. Minhaj writes that on account of a unsavory remark made by Qutbuddin Husain Ghori in the against Balban, he was martyred (1255).[155] The incident occurred soon after the re-installation of Balban at the centre after the fall of Imaduddin Raihan. Shortly after this, Saifuddin Aibak Kashli Khan (s. no. 24), brother of Ulugh Khan Balban, was assigned the extensive iqta' of Qutbuddin Husain. Isami clearly writes that Ulugh Khan Balban killed Qutbuddin Husain on account of a remark made by the latter.[156] If we look at Table 5, we will find that all these Turkish amirs who were involved in killing the free-born nobles or involved in defying the authority of the Sultan (s. nos. 15, 18, 20, 21, 25), were relatively less-recognized junior ghulams of Iltutmish who gradually gained ascendancy during the period of his successors. To this list we can also add the name of Nusratuddin Sher Khan (s. no. 23), the cousin of Ulugh Khan. Being a slave of Iltutmish, he rose to power during the post Iltutmish era and held the title of Khan. He showed scant respect to Balban Kishlu Khan, Tajuddin Arsalan Khan and others.[157] In his iqtas, Sher Khan acted according to his free-will and had the courage to place his subordinate officer, Kurez Khan, as his representative in Multan (after ousting Qarlughs from there) while he himself was the feudatory of Tabarhindah.[158] His recalcitrant demeanour clearly matched with the innate nature of Turk-i-Chihilgani as perceived by Barani.

On the basis of evidences furnished by Minhaj and Barani, it can be safely concluded that Tajuddin Sanjar Kuret Khan, Ikhtiyaruddin Yuzbak Tughril Khan, Izzuddin Balban Kishlu Khan,

Nusrat Khan Badruddin Sunkar Sufi, Nusratuddin Sher Khan and Ulugh Khan Balban were members of Turk i-Chihilgani no matter what its actual strength at a time would have been. Barani has categorically mentioned that Ulugh Khan Balban and Sher Khan belonged to the fraternity of Turk-i-Chihilgani.[159] Barani has given a succinct account of the post Iltutmish era but Minhaj has spared a considerable time and space in describing the events of this period in the sequence of their occurrence. Hence, the confusion in identifying the Turk-i Chihilgani and the consequent controversies in determining the character as well as the numerical strength of this group of nobility.

V

The nobility of Iltutmish was indeed heterogeneous and comprised of personnel from diverse ethnic and social background. A large section of the nobility consisted of Turkish slaves purchased by the Sultan from time to time. Though the Sultan bought a large number of slaves, not all were destined to be his close-associates. Among the large congregation of mamluks, the few selected one constituted part of his elite corps or principal slave-officers. These officers were selected on the basis of trust, efficiency as well as proximity and length of association with the Sultan. The Turkish slaves however did not enjoy the monopoly of political offices in the Delhi Sultanate. A number of immigrants, Tajiks, Ghorids and even free-born Turks, were also an indispensable part of the ruling class of Iltutmish. A host of individuals from Central and West Asia also joined the court of Iltutmish. Their presence and administrative experience enhanced the prestige of the court of Delhi to a large extent. Apart from them many Khaljis, Abbysinians, slaves of former rulers and dignitaries and a few Indians also constituted an integral part of the ruling class making it well-balanced and effective.

The large presence of non-Turkish elements in the ruling class of the Sultanate can be ascertained from the fact that when Aibak died in 1210, the struggle for power was confined to two warring groups of Turks only. However, by the time of the death of Iltutmish in 1236, the non-Turkish elements in the nobility had become so powerful that the scramble for power at times took the form of Turks versus Tajiks squabble. The desire to wield the absolute authority as well as the weakness of Iltutmish's successors led many nobles to resort to violence and murder chief among them were Turk-i-Chihilgani, the lesser known Turkish slave officers of Iltutmish. The chaos and confusion that prevailed in the sultanate after the death of the Sultan also gave a keen edge to their ambitions. However, the Turks were not a compact group themselves. The Turkish nobility in India consisted of men of diverse tribes and origin. Aziz Ahmad writes that in old Turkish terminology, they could be described as a 'qonat', a group of people who stuck together.[160] They formed alliances mainly for the sake of personal ambitions and for a common cause. They fought jointly against a common enemy but turned against each other when their common objective was fulfilled.[161] For instance, Balban Kishlu Khan and Qutlugh Khan supported Raihan, a noble of Indian origin against their Turkish comrade Ulugh Khan Balban. But subsequently, Sher Khan was pitched against Balban Kishlu Khan, Arsalan Khan and even his cousin Ulugh Khan Balban. Ulugh Khan adopted the same strategy against members of his own group. We also know that Badruddin Sunkar Rumi ganged up with his fellow non-Turkish nobles to dethrone Sultan Mu'izuddin Bahram Shah.[162] Later, the Turks rallied around Muhazzabuddin, the wazir and the Tajiks against the same Sultan.[163] Therefore, alliances and factions among the nobles were formed according to the expediency of the situation and in keeping with their personal ambitions and immediate goals.

NOTES:

[1] Peter Jackson, 'The Mamluk Institution in Early Muslim India,' *Journal of Royal Asiatic Society* (1990), p. 344

[2] Irfan Habib, 'Iqta's: Distribution of Revenue Resources among the Ruling class' in Tapan Raychaudhari and Irfan Habib (ed.) *The Cambridge Economic History of India, vol. I : c. 1200-1750* (Hyderabad: Orient Longman Limited, 1984; first published, 1982), p. 68

[3] M. Athar Ali, *The Mughal Nobility under Aurangzeb* (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1970; first published, 1968), p. 02

[4] U. N. Day, *The Government of the Sultanate* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Limited, 1993, first published, 1972), p. 18

[5] Muhammad Aziz Ahmad, *Political History and Institutions of the Early Turkish Empire of Delhi (1206-1290 A.D.)*(New Delhi: Oriental Books Reprint Corporation, first Indian edition, 1972), p. 04, fn 07

[6] Peter Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate: A Political and Military History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 04

[7] Ibid.

[8] Muhammad Aziz Ahmad, *Political History and Institutions of the Early Turkish Empire of Delhi,* p. 04

[9] Minhaj-i-Siraj Juzjani, *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, translated into English by Major H. G. Raverty (Calcutta: The Asiatic Society, 1995; first published, 1881), vol. I, p. 497

[10] After the Second battle of Tarain, the Ghorids increasingly played a second fiddle in further conquests in India. The conquered areas later on were practically placed under Mu'izuddin slave officers. Irfan Habib opines that this was due to the incapacity of the political structure of Ghor to serve as framework for empire. The Ghorid polity was based on clan and family system. The attraction of collecting a corps of trained slaves to make his writ run and his treasures and territories safe from clannish co-sharers must have seemed irresistible to Mu'izuddin Ghori. see Irfan Habib, 'Formation of the Sultanate Ruling Class of the Thirteenth Century' in Irfan Habib (ed.) *Medieval India 1: Researches in the History of India 1200-1750* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000; first published, 1992), pp. 06-07

[11] Isami, *Futuh al Salatin*, translated into English by Agha Mahdi Husain (London: Asia Publishing House, 1977), vol. II, p. 238

[12] Irfan Habib, 'Slavery in the Delhi Sultanate, thirteenth and fourteenth centuries- Evidence from Sufic Literature,' *Indian Historical Review*, 15 (1988-89), p. 251

[13] In 647 H/ 1249-50 A.D., Minhaj received from Nasiruddin Mahmud a robe of honour, a grant of forty war captives (slaves) and hundred ass- loads of presents so that the former could dispatch it to his sister living in Khurasan. Minhaj presented the gift to his sister after a voyage to Khurasan via Multan. See *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 686; *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 822

[14] Peter Jackson, 'The Mamluk Institution in Early Muslim India,' p. 340

[15] I am not very sure about the exact status of Tajuddin Kuret Khan (serial no. 15 in Table 1, as it has never been mentioned by Minhaj that he was a slave and was purchased by Iltutmish. see *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 756. All the serial numbers in the footnotes have been taken from Table 1 & Table 5; hereafter s. no.

[16] One of the slave-officer of Iltutmish, Qamar uddin Qiran Tamur Khan (s. no.. 8) was purchased from Asaduddin Mankali who is said to have been the nephew of Malik Firuz., see *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 742. Malik Firuz was related to the governor of Sijistan and Nimroz.

[17] Malik Hindu Khan (s. no.9) was purchased from Fakhruddin Safahani, evidently a native of Isfahan, Persia. See *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 744

[18] Sinn is a place near Raiy. Ikhtiyaruddin Aetkin (s. no. 12) another slave of Iltutmish was purchased from Amir Aibak Sannai, see *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 749. Sinn is also the name of a city on the Tigris.

[19] Two officers of Iltutmish Tajuddin Arsalan Khan (s. no. 19) and Saifuddin Aibak Kashli Khan (s. no. 24) had been purchased from Abu Bakr who was an Abyssinian. See *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 766 & 795

[20] Ulugh Khan Balban (s. no. 25) was brought from Khawajah Jamaluddin of Basrah who in turn had purchased him from Baghdad. See *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 800

[21] Ibn-i- Battuta, *The Rehla of Ibn-i-Battuta*, translated into English by Agha Mahdi Husain (Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1976; first edition, 1953), p. 36

[22] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 790

[23] Several nobles of Khawarzm had moved to the territories of Syria and Egypt after the defeat of Jalaluddin Mangbarni at the hands of Chengiz Khan, see *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 230

[24] Peter Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate,* p. 63-64

[25] See *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 752

[26] Ibid, p. 796

[27] Ibid, p. 724-25

[28] Ibid, p. 727

[29] Ibid, p. 732

[30] Ibid, p. 725

[31] Ibid, pp. 777-79

[32] Ibid, p. 796-97

[33] Ibid, p. 742

[34] Ibid, p. 723 & 745

[35] Ibid, p. 729

[36] See *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 756. Even Aibak and Iltutmish had impressed Mu'izuddin on account of their military exploits. For Aibak and Iltutmish, see *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 513 & pp. 604-05 respectively.

[37] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 549

[38] Ibn-i- Battuta, p. 37

[39] Sunil Kumar, 'When Slaves were Nobles: The Shamsi Bandagan in the Early Delhi Sultanate,' *Studies in History*, 10, 1, (1994), p. 40

[40] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 513

[41] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 789

[42] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 723

[43] Tajuddin Gajzlak Khan (s. no. 1) started his career as Chashnigir and Ikhtiyaruddin Yuzbak Tughhril Khan (s. no. 18) as Naib Chasnigir of Iltutmish. See *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 723 & p. 761

[44] Malik Nasiruddin Aiyitim, (s. no. 3), Saifuddin Aibak-i-Uchch (s. no. 4) and Ikhtiyaruddin Aetkin (s. no. 12) started their career as Sar-i-Jandar. See *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, pp. 728-29 & p. 750

[45] Saifuddin Aibak Yughantat (s. no. 5) had his first appointment as Amir-i-majlis. *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 731

[46] Izzuddin Tughril Tughan Khan (s. no. 7), Ikhtiyaruddin Qaraqash Khan Aetkin (s. no. 10), and Izzuddin Balban Kishlu Khan (s. no. 20) were all entrusted the duty of Saqi-i-khas on their first appointment. See *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 736, p. 746 & p. 779

[47] The initial appointment of Qamaruddin Qiran Tamur Khan (s. no. 8) was as Naib Amir-i-Akhur and Tajuddin Sanjar Tez Khan (s. no. 17) was as Amir-i-Akhur. See *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 743 & p. 759

[48] Hindu Khan (s. no. 9) was initially yuzban in the service of Iltutmish. *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 745

[49] Iktiyaruddin Altunia (s. no. 11) commenced his career with the office of Sharabdar. *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 748

[50] Badruddin Sunkar Rumi (s. no. 13) was initially appointed as Tashtdar. *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 752

[51] Tajuddin Sanjar Kikluk (s. no. 14) and Tajuddin Arsalan Khan (s. no. 19) were Jamadar at the beginning of their careers. *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 754 & p. 766. Saifuddin Bat Khan Aibak (s. no. 16) was Sar-i- Jamadar. *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 758

[52] Ulugh Khan Balban (s. no. 25) was appointed to the post of Khasahdar at the onset of his career. *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 802

[53] K. A. Nizami, *Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India during the Thirteenth Century* (New Delhi: Asia Publishing House, 1961), p. 126

[54] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 729

[55] Ibid, p. 725

[56] Ibid, p. 732. He received the title during his governorship of Lakhnauti when he captured and dispatched several elephants from Bengal to the court of Delhi.

[57]*Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 744

[58]Ibid, p. 746

[59] Ibid, p. 726

[60] Ibid, p. 731-32

[61] Ibid, p. 736

[62] Peter Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate,* p. 62

[63] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 745

[64] Fakr-i-Mudabbir, *Shajra-i-Ansab* as cited in Peter Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate*, op. cit.,p p. 64-5. Also see I. H. Siddiqui, *Indo- Persian Historiography up to the Thirteenth Century* (Delhi: Primus Books, 2010), p. 22

[65] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 767. It is not clear how the daughter of Bahauddin Tughril came under the patronage of Iltutmish. Also, this was not the first instance when a ruler was instrumental in expanding the social circle of his

slaves through matrimonial alliance. Mu'izuddin Muhammad Ghori had himself commanded Yalduz to give one of his daughter in marriage to Qutbuddin Aibak and another to Nasiruddin Qabacha. *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 500. It led to the enhancement of the social ties of a slave officer which was used by them to move up the political ladder. Precisely due to this, Alauddin Khalji had banned inter-marriages among his nobles; they were required to take permission from the Sultan for such contracts. See Ziyauddin Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, translated into Urdu by Sayyid Moin ul Haqq (Lahore: Urdu Science Board, 2004), p. 420

[66] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 746

[67] Sunil Kumar, 'When Slaves were Nobles…,' p. 42

[68] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 724

[69] Ibid, p. 730

[70] Ibid, p. 725. The title of Kabir Khan Mangirni was bestowed upon him at this juncture.

[71] Ibid, p. 746. This was the time when he received the title of Qaraqash Khan.

[72] For the assignment of Lahore to Prince Nasiruddin Mahmud, see *Taj ul Ma'asir,* p. 332; for the appointment of Ruknuddin Firuz, see *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 631

[73] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 733. The Sultan's share in the khums, according to the Islamic law, was 1/5th of the spoil and the rest 4/5th amount went to the army.

[74] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 745

[75] Barani, op. cit, p. 108

[76] Ibid, p. 197. Imad ul Mulk was said to have been promoted from post of Ariz-i-Shikar (?) to Ariz-i-Mamalik in the reign of Iltutmish. He continued to occupy the post during the successors of Iltutmish and Balban also bestowed the same office upon him.

[77] Sunil Kumar, 'When Slaves were Nobles…,' p. 47

[78] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 732

[79] Ibid, p. 746

[80] Ibid, p. 728

[81] Ibid, p. 729-30

[82] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, pp. 625-27

[83] *Futuh al Salatin,* p. 253

[84] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 235. From Appendix B, it is clear that Firuz Iltutmish and Tajuddin Binaltigin were cousins. It is also evident that the fathers of both Firuz and Binaltigin were paternal uncles of Arsalan, the Khwarazm Shah. From Appendix B, it is also evident that Malik Firuz was both the uncle and cousin of Takish Khwarazm Shah.

[85] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 199. Nishapur was captured after the death of Sultan Takish Khwarazm Shah in 596 AH/ 1200 AD. At the time, Nishapur was under Ali Shah, his son and brother of Alauddin Muhammad Shah. For the complete story about the capture of Nishapur, see *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, pp. 379-80

[86] Peter Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate,* p. 42

[87] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 416. Alauddin Utsuz captured Ghor after the death of Ghiyasuddin Mahmud (d. 607AH/ 1211 AD) in the middle of Jamadil Awwal, 607/ October- November, 1210. See *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 410. He captured Ghor with the aid of Alauddin Khwarazm Shah and therefore, he was a subordinate officer of the Khwarazm Shah.

[88] In the battle, Nasiruddin Husain, the Amir-i-Shikar of Ghazni was commanding the army. Alauddin Utsuz was fatally wounded. Though Qutbuddin Husain showed great valour and escorted the Sultan out of the battlefield, Sultan Utsuz failed to survive and died on the way to Sangah. For more details, see *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, pp. 415-16

[89] For Qutbuddin Ghori's interactions with the Mongols in Ghor, see *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, pp. 1063-1069

[90] Barani, p. 92

[91] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, pp. 641-42

[92] Ibid, p. 657

[93] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 753

[94] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 661 & p. 702 ; *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 798

[95] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 762

[96] For reference, see *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, pp. 337-38

[97] *Tabaqat-i -Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 390. From Appendix C, it is evident that Nasiruddin Abu Bikr was the nephew of the Ghorid brothers (Ghiasuddin and Mu'izuddin) and also the brother-in-law (wife's brother) of Mu'izuddin Muhammad Ghori.

[98] Ibid, p. 345

[99] Ibid, p. 417

[100] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 762

[101] I.H. Siddiqui, *Indo Persian Historiography up to the Thirteenth Century* (Delhi: Primus Books, 2010), p.85

[102] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 626, fn 01

[103] Hasan Nizami, *Taj ul Ma'asir*, translated into English by Bhagwat Saroop (Delhi: Saud Ahmad Dehlavi, 1998), p. 295 & p. 304

[104] Iqtidar Husain Siddiqui, 'Historical Information in the Thirteenth Century Collection of Persian Poems,' *Studies in Islam*, 19 (1982), p. 58

[105] *Taj ul Ma'asir,* p. 53

[106] Ibid, p. 107

[107] Ibid, p. 304. About the last two, Naseeruddin Ali and Badruddin Sanqar Tigin, we do not have any other information

[108] For complete reference, see *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 549. .

[109] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 575

[110] Ibid, p. 200

[111] Peter Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate,* p. 42, also fn 90

[112]Probably captured during the expedition of Iltutmish against Qabacha in 1216-17 AD (in Lahore) in which a number of men were captured while fighting. Iltutmish granted amnesty to them. See *Taj ul Ma'asir,* p. 331

[113] Nasiruddin Tughan of Tabaqat twenty-one was certainly Izzuddin Tughril Tughan Khan (s. no. 7) of Tabaqat twenty-two. In Tabaqat twenty-one, Nasiruddin Tughan was described as the fief holder of Badaun, a position which was held by Izzuddin Tughril Tughan Khan. See *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 626 and *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 736

[114] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 629

[115] *Taj ul Ma'asir,* p. 295

[116] Barani, *Tarikh-i Firuz Shahi* p. 92

[117] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 613

[118] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 620

[119] Ibid, p. p. 631

[120] Ibid, p. 635

[121] Peter Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate,* p. 42

[122] Muhammad Aziz Ahmad, 'The Early Turkish Nucleus in India,' *Turcica, Revue d'etudes Turques*, 9 (1977), p. 100

[123] S. B. P. Nigam, *Nobility under the Sultans of Delhi AD 1206-1398* (Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1968), p. 97

[124] However at later period in 657 AH/ 1259 AD during the reign of Nasiruddin Mahmud, we find offices being transferred to the off springs of the earlier nobles. See *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 713

[125] A. B. M. Habibullah, *The Foundation of Muslim Rule in India* (Allahabad: Central Publishing House, 1976; first published, 1945), p. 284

[126] K. A. Nizami, *Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India during the Thirteenth Century,* p. 127, fn 07

[127] Khurram Qadir, 'The Amiran-i-Chihilgani of Northern India,' *Journal of Central Asia: Journal of International Association for the Study of Cultures of Central Asia,* vol. 4, no. 2 (December, 1981), pp. 97-98

[128] Peter Jackson, 'The Mamluk Institution in Early Muslim India,' p. 345-46; also *The Delhi Sultanate,* p. 66

[129] Sunil Kumar, 'When Slaves were Nobles…,' p. 51. Also see Sunil Kumar, *The Emergence of the Delhi Sultanate* (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2007), pp. 152-59

[130] Irfan Habib, 'Formation of the Sultanate Ruling Class of the Thirteenth Century' in Irfan Habib (ed.) *Medieval India 1: Researches in the History of India 1200-1750* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000; first published, 1992), p. 16

[131] Gavin Hambly, 'Who were the Chihilgani, the Forty Slaves of Sultan Shams al Din Iltutmish of Delhi,' *Iran*, 10, 1972, p. 59

[132] Ibid, p. 60-61

[133] Barani, p. 73

[134] Muhammad Qasim Hindu Shah Ferishta, *Tarikh-i Ferishta*, translated into English by John Briggs as *History of the Rise of Muhammadan Power in India* (Delhi: Low Price Publications, 2006; first published, 1829) vol. I, p.138

[135] Khwajah Nizamuddin Ahmed, *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, translated into English by Brajendra Nath De (Delhi: Low Price Publications, 1992, first published, 1911), vol. I. p. 93

[136] *Futuh al Salatin,* p. 238

[137] Ibn Battuta, p. 36

[138] At one place (only once), Barani writes that the bandagan-i-Shamsi were slaves of one master (khawajahtash) and all the forty (har chihil; in urdu translation, challis ke challis) reached the exalted position at the same time. For Persian text, see Ziyauddin Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, edited by Shaikh Abdul Rashid (Aligarh: Department of History, Muslim University, 1957), vol. I, p. 33. For Urdu translation, Saiyid Moin ul Haqq, op. cit. p. 75

[139] *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, edited by Shaikh Abdul Rashid, pp. 32-33; translated by Saiyid Moin ul Haqq, op. cit. pp. 74-75

[140] Ibid.

[141]For the rebellion of Kabir Khan Ayaz, see *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, pp. 639-40; *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 726

[142] For the comparison of both the list see *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, pp. 625-27 (list of Iltutmish's maliks) and pp. 673-74 (maliks of Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud)

[143] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 820

[144] Ibid, p. 788

[145] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 635

[146] For Ikhtiyaruddin Yuzbak Tughril Khan's (s. no. 18) participation, see *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 761; for the role of Izzuddin Balban Kashlu Khan (s. no. 20), see *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 779

[147] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 780

[148] Ibid, pp. 763-64

[149] Ibid, p. 784

[150] Ibid, p. 785

[151] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 662

[152] For Kuret Khan's (s. no. 15) involvement, see *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 757; for Nusrat Khan Badruddin Sunkar Sufi (s. no. 21), refer to *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, pp. 787-88

[153] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, pp. 806-07

[154] For the complete episode, see *Futuh al Salatin,* pp. 280-85

[155] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 702; *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 798

[156] For details, see *Futuh al Salatin,* pp. 285-87

[157] For Balban Kishlu Khan's (s. no. 20) altercation with Sher Khan (s. no. 23), see *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, pp. 782-83

[158] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. II, p. 792

[159] *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, edited by Shaikh Abdul Rashid, p. 30 & p. 76; translated by Saiyid Moin ul Haqq, p. 71& pp. 129-30

[160] Muhammad Aziz Ahmad, ' The Early Turkish Nucleus in India,' op. cit., pp. 101-02

[161] S. B. P. Nigam, *Nobility under the Sultans of Delhi AD 1206-1398,* op. cit. p. 183

[162] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 652

[163] Ibid, p. 658

CHAPTER SEVEN

Sufi and the Sultan: Reflection of Iltutmish's Image in the Medieval Sufi and Historical Literature

"When thou attainest unto power and dominion thou wilt ever regard devotees and ascetics with reverence, and watch over their weal"[1]

- A durvesh to young Iltutmish

The aforementioned lines perhaps indicate the attitude of Iltutmish towards the men of piety. After narrating this particular incident, Sultan Iltutmish himself had remarked "I gave him (the durvesh) my promise; and all the prosperity and blessings which I acquired, I acquired through the compassionate regard of that Durvesh"[2]. If not anything else, the sultan here tried to portray himself as a kind and God-fearing monarch whose achievements were based on the blessings of a recluse. This chapter attempts to analyse the religious leanings of Iltutmish and the factors responsible for Iltutmish's intimacy with the Sufis (for the meaning of the term 'sufi' and the origin of sufis, see appendix D). Besides religious inclination and apart from the factors that motivated a sultan to be close to the Sufis and the theologians, Iltutmish had sufficient reasons to be in the good books of the Sufis and hence, the formulation of a favourable image of the Sultan in the malfuzat.

I

A large number of anecdotes relate Iltutmish's interaction with the Sufis and his being an extremely pious and devoted Muslim monarch. The earliest interaction of Iltutmish with an ascetic took place in Bukhara where he was sold into slavery. Once his master, a kinsman of Sadr-i-Jahan sent the young Iltutmish to the market to buy grapes.[3] On the way, he lost his money and out of fear of chastisement by his master, began to cry. However, a good durvesh helped him in that hour of misery and in return of favour, the durvesh uttered the words mentioned above. This rather happy encounter with the hermit must have left a lasting impression on his mind. From the work of Isami it appears that Iltutmish had spent some time in Baghdad, the axis of Islam and spiritual learning in those days. We are also told that once a sam'a party was held in a hospice of Baghdad which was attended by prominent Sufi shaikhs including Qazi Hamiduddin Nagori. Iltutmish served the Sufis by cutting off the burnt part of the candles with a pair of scissors throughout the night.[4] We also know that during his sojourn in Baghdad, Iltutmish once went to the khanqah of Shaikh Shihabuddin Suhrawardi, presented him a few coins, and pleaded for blessings (dua). Shaikh Shihabuddin recited the Fatiha and said "I see undeniable signs of sovereignty on the face of this person".[5] Shaikh Auhad uddin Kirmani, who was also present, remarked "Due to your blessings his faith too will be preserved in this worldly empire".[6] In *Fawai'dul Fu'ad*, a passing reference of this incident has also been made. Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya is said to have remarked "Sultan Shamsuddin came to know both Shaikh Shihabuddin Suhrawardi and Shaikh Auhad uddin Kirmani………and one of them said to him: 'One day you will become a king'".[7] These early incidents would have left a favourable

impression about the men of God on the minds of young Iltutmish. It is common knowledge that early impressions play a vital role in moulding a man's personality.

After being purchased by Qutubuddin Aibak, Iltutmish was entrusted with many important offices. In 1203, he was appointed as the iqtadar of Badaun.[8] Badaun, was one of the important Sufi centres in India in early 13th century. Many saints like Maulana Alauddin Usuli, Maulana Sirajuddin Tirmizi, Qazi Jamaluddin Multani etc were buried in the vicinity of Badaun.[9] Even the greatest Sufi saint of medieval India, Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya was born and brought up in Badaun. Once, while playing polo in Badaun, Iltutmish encountered a stooping old man to whom he gave nothing. A little later, he saw a stout young lad. Reaching his pockets, Iltutmish took out some money and handed it over to the young man. He then remarked, "To that old man who wanted something. I gave nothing. To that youth who wanted nothing, I gave something. If it was up to me I would have given something to that old man, but to whomever one gives God is the true giver. What can I do?"[10] These words demonstrate the Sultan's extreme faith in God and his religious leanings. This incident was referred in Sufi jamaatkhana to teach the inmates the maxim "God is the true Giver".[11] Iltutmish's religious ideology had been nurtured at Bokhara, Baghdad, Badaun and Delhi- all principle centres of Sufism and from these places he developed his interest in Sufis and Sufism.[12]

After ascending the throne of Delhi in 1210, Sultan Iltutmish did not neglect his religious duties. He continued to patronize men of religion and paid respect to the saints. He is reported to have addressed Shaikh Nakhshabi as 'Father'.[13] The Sultan was very strict in the performance of religious rituals. On Fridays, he would go to the mosque and strictly perform all prescribed prayers.[14] We are told by Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya, "every night Sultan Shamsuddin would wake up and as soon as he woke up, he would perform his ablutions, offer two cycles of prayer,

and then go back to sleep…….without ever awakening others"[15] It not only exhibited the religious attitude of the Sultan but also his kindness towards his courtiers and common folks that has been highlighted by many a Sufi authors. During the Gwalior campaign in 629 H/1232 A.D., religions discourses were held thrice a week. During Ramzaan, the ten days of Zil Hijjah and ten days of Muharram, lectures were delivered daily.[16] On the same expedition, which extended for a period of eleven months, congregational prayers were performed on the occasion of the festivals of Eid ul Fitr and Eid ul Azha and on the eve of Eid ul azha, and Minhaj was commanded to read the Khutbah.[17] All these evidences show that the Sultan was spiritual minded, had great regard for the men of piety and was very regular in the performance of his own religions obligations. Isami has written that he ruled according to the principles of justice and generosity since he was aware of the roots and branches of the Shariah law. Since he had never let out of his mind the fact that a mortal had to die and go to the next World, he was extremely considerate to the people for the sake of God.[18] A hefty sum was spent yearly on religious experts, venerable Sayyads, Maliks, Amirs, Sadrs and other great men.[19] Isami has reported that once Iltutmish was riding around Hauz i Shamsi when a haji suddenly arrived there with a bottle of Zamzam water. He asked the Sultan to taste the holy water. The Sultan replied that he alone must not enjoy this water but asked the pilgrim to pour the whole of it into the source of the reservoir so that all people, irrespective of high and low, could share it. Thereafter, the king poured it into the tank and sprinkled a few drops into the foundation of the mosque.[20] This incident reflects the kindness and compassion of Iltutmish towards his subjects. He also arranged for *langerkhana* near Hauz i Shamsi[21] for poor and indigent. We are also told that once a very severe famine broke out in Delhi. Iltutmish sent a courtier to all the saints of the city and requested them to pray for the well being of the entire population.[22] From the above description, the image emerged of Iltutmish was

that of an extremely pious and devoted muslim monarch who was kind-hearted and altruist, had extreme faith in the action of God, was particular about performing his own religious obligations, humble towards courtiers and common folks and subjects, spiritual-minded and had great regard for the men of piety. Minhaj has perhaps rightly remarked that "The probability is that never was a sovereign of such exemplary faith and of such kindhearted and reverence towards recluses, devotees, divines and doctors of religion and law, from the mother of creation ever enwrapped in the swaddling bands of dominion"[23]

II

It is evident from the foregoing account that Iltutmish was a kind-hearted and pious monarch and was known for his noble and benevolent disposition. However, it is essential to delve further into the matter and investigate the probable reasons, other than philanthropical and spiritual, which crystallized the casting of Iltutmish's relations with the Sufis, particularly of Delhi and Multan. The two predominant Sufi sects in India during the first half of the thirteenth century were the Chishti and the Suhrawardi .During the reign of Iltutmish (1210 – 1236), the prominent Sufi saint of Chishti order was Shaikh Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki (1168 – 1235) who lived in Kilokheri near Delhi. The Suhrawardi saints who flourished during Iltutmish's lifetime were greater in number. The leading Suhrawardi saint of the period was undoubtedly Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya (1182-1262), a resident of Multan. However, Qazi Hamiduddin Nagori, Shaikh Jalaluddin Tabrezi (1244-45), Shaikh Nuruddin Mubarak Ghaznavi of the Suhrawardi fraternity were equally reputed. Iltutmish had intimate relations with all these Sufis and showed his reverence towards them throughout his life.

Apart from the belief that an offence against a Sufi shaikh would lead to the downfall of the Sultan (for other general reasons that led to the reverence of sufi-saints by common people and kings alike, see appendix D), there were other factors which compelled Iltutmish to associate himself with these men. For instance, when Iltutmish ascended the throne in 1210, a deputation of ulama, headed by Qazi Wajihuddin Kashani, waited upon the Sultan and desired to see his letter of manumission.[24] This incident made Iltutmish conscious of the position and authority of the ulama and their habit to coax the Sultan to be fanatical in his approach towards the State and its subjects. However, he was convinced that in a multi-religious society like India, he had to rule in a secular manner. In such circumstances, the association with the Sufis proved beneficial. The Sufis, especially the Chistis demonstrated that the Islamic truth was not confined to the clauses of the Shariah.[25] Secondly, since Central Asian Sufis had been instrumental in converting Turkish tribes to Islam shortly before their migrations from Central Asia into Khurasan, the Sufis as wielders of spiritual and worldly authority were not unknown to the Turks.[26] The Sufis were held in high esteem by the Turkish nobility. Since much of the administration of the Sultanate of Delhi during the reign of Iltutmish was in the hands of the Turks, he could not ignore the Sufi saints. By being close to the Sufis, he strove to win the goodwill of the noble. Thirdly, with the devastation of the Islamic lands post Mongol eruption, a large scale migration of Central Asian people took place. Many nobles, intellectuals, traders, merchants, poets, religious men migrated to India and settled primarily in the domain of Iltutmish. These Central Asian immigrants proved to be an important element in the smooth functioning of the government of Iltutmish. It was a period of turbulence. The humility and spiritual discourses of the Sufis rendered solace to their aching hearts. The simplicity and generosity, catholicity, austerity and readiness of the Sufi saints to apply healing balm on the tormented souls, quench the spiritual thirst of their disciples

and foster a sense of harmony among the people of different castes and creeds in one way or the other and generated a kind of social and communal harmony[27] which was one of the essential requirements for an infant state like the Delhi Sultanate. However, the most important reason for Iltutmish's intimacy with the Chisti saint Shaikh Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki seems to have been related with his goal of making Delhi a paramount power and moulding it into a cultural hub. Iltutmish was the chief architect of the capital city, Delhi.[28] He made Delhi the capital of his empire[29] Right from the time he was invited by the nobles of Delhi to assume sovereign status, Iltutmish had been constantly working for the elevation of the seat of the government. He wanted to make his position unalterable in Delhi and nearby areas. He had encountered opposition at the very beginning of his reign. Not only were the rulers of the Indian principalities but also his own co-religionists ruling in Ghazna, Multan, Uchch, Lahore and Bengal his adversaries. In such a situation, it was imperative that he should stabilize his rule at Delhi and consolidate his position. It is also noteworthy that with the exodus of large number of people from Central Asia to Hindustan, the focal point of Islamic culture and learning had deviated towards the South Asian subcontinent by extending shelters to the refugees, Iltutmish created Delhi as the new nucleus of Islamic culture and learning. Isami has rightly observed that "the city wore a bright look…..Many a Saiyed of correct decent came over from Arabia. Many tradesman from the land of Khurasan, many painters from the country of China, many ulama of the Bukhara stock and many a devotee and men of piety came from different regions. Craftsmen of every kind and every country as well as beauties from every race and city; many assayers, jewellers and pearl sellers, philosophers and physicians of the Greek school and learned men from every land- all gathered in that blessed city like moths that gather round the candle light. Delhi became the Ka'ba of the seven contingents and the whole region became the home of Islam"[30] The Sufis

belonged to the 'Ashraf' category and were the bearers of Islamic traditions. The information of Ismai has been authenticated by Minhaj himself. He says "….People from various parts of the world has gathered together at the capital city of Dilhi, which is the seat of government of Hindustan, and the centre of the circle of Islam………This city, through the number of the grants and unbounded munificence of that pious monarch (Iltutmish) became the retreat and resting-place for the learned, the virtuous, and the excellent of the various parts of the world; and those who by the mercy of God, the most High, escaped from the toil of calamities sustained by the provinces and cities of Ajam, and the misfortunes caused by the (irruption of the) infidels Mughals, made the capital- the asylum of the universe- of that sovereign their asylum, refuge, resting-place and point of safety".[31] Delhi was not only the political and administrative centre of the Turkish empire in India, it was also the hub of its cultural activity. It is pertinent to note that the literature of the Sultanate period never referred the capital Delhi merely by its name, it is called either 'Hazrat i Delhi' or the city (Shahr). Iltutmish assigned himself the task of providing political stability in Delhi and expanding its cultured base and guaranteeing its presence on the world map. This task of political adroitness and cultural enrichment would perhaps have been incomplete without associating himself with Khwaja Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki, one of the popular personalities of Delhi at this time. Khwaja Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki was a native of Aush, a town in Fargana (modern Uzbekistan). He was the chief khalifa of Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti. While Khwaja Bakhtiyar Kaki was in Baghdad, his spiritual master Moinuddin Chishti migrated to Delhi from Khurasan. It is reported in Sufi literature that overwhelmed with the desire to meet his master anew, Qutubuddin proceeded towards India in the company of well known Suhrawardi saint, Jalaluddin Tabrizi. After a short halt at Multan, he reached Delhi sometime after 1224. The welcome accorded to the saint by Iltutmish was initially a part of his

general policy of providing patronage to distinguished Sufis and savants visiting India. However, due to scarcity of water in Delhi he opted to reside in Kilokheri.[32] Nizamuddin Ahmad asserts that Khwaja Qutubuddin assisted Iltutmish in the selection of the site for the construction of Hauz i Shamsi, the tank which the Sultan built to deal with the problem of shortage of water supply in Delhi.[33] Qutubuddin moved to the metropolis and took up residence near the mosque of Malik Izzuddin probably after the construction of this tank. A little later Iltutmish offered the Khwaja the prestigious post of Shaikh ul Islam[34], which the former humbly declined.[35] However, this decision of bestowing the post on the saint by the Sultan was not taken in haste or was motivated by the Sultan's inclination towards the pious and holy men, in general and Bakhtiyar Kaki, in particular. It was an effort to rope up or at least attach the name of distinguished person with the machinery of the state. Right from the time of his arrival in India, the followers of Khwaja Bakhtiyar Kaki was increasing rapidly. We know that aggrieved by the allegations of the then Shaikh ul Islam, Najmuddin Sughra on Khwaja Qutubuddin, when Shaikh Moinuddin Chishti resolved to take Qutubuddin back to Ajmer, a chaos erupted in Delhi. A large population of the inhabitants of Delhi followed the two saints for miles.[36] Such was the popularity of Khwaja Bakhtiyar that even the Sultan himself had to come after them. Seeing the love and affection of the masses, Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti allowed his disciple to remain in Delhi. Khwaja Bakhtiyar Kaki had, therefore, carved a favourable image for himself in Delhi and was loved by the people. Iltutmish, thus, could not afford a policy of being indifferent to him especially when it was a case of Delhi saint which was the seat of his government. It was essential for him to pay reverence to the Sufi in order to gain the respect of his citizens. Khwaja Qutubuddin also held a peculiar position in the eyes of learned class. When poet Nasiri came from Transoxiana to Delhi, he alighted at the khanqah of Khwaja Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki

and requested him to pray for lavish reward for him from Iltutmish for the *qasidah* he had penned in praise of the Sultan.[37] Therefore, Iltutmish's decision of entrusting the post of Shaikh ul Islam on the Khwaja Bakhtiyar Kaki was a prudent one. However, the Khwaja refused to the accept it. But it didn't have any negative impact on the relation of the saint with the Sultan. The latter continued to pay respect to the former. It is written in *Siyarul Auliya* that for the restoration a village near Ajmer that had been assigned to the sons of Khwaja Moinuddin Hasan Sijzi as jagir, Khwaja Bakhtiyar Kaki visited the court of Iltutmish.[38] The Mufti of Ajmer had disposed the sons of Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti from their jagir later on. This was the solitary incident of the visit of Khwaja Bakhtiyar Kaki to the court. With complete reverence, the Sultan received him and at once, issued the orders for the retrieval of the jagir along with some asharfi. The Khwaja too continued to render moral support to the Sultan. It is said that Sultan Iltutmish led the prayers and carried the bier or Khwaja Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki on his shoulders to the graveyard.[39]

III

The relations of Iltutmish with the Sufis of Suhrawardi sects were far more vital and substantial than with the Sufis of the Chishti order. The Suhrawardi sect was the predominant Sufi order in the first half of the thirteenth century. Three major khalifa of Shihabuddin Abu Hafs Suhrawardi: Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya, Qazi Hamiduddin Nagori and Shaikh Nuruddin Mubarak Ghaznavi; one devoted murid of the great Shaikh, Jalaluddin Tabrizi; and one relatively unknown khalifa of the Shaikh, Majduddin Haji not only lived in India but also left an undeniable mark on Indian society (for more about the Suhrawardi sufis and their ideology, see appendix D). However, not much have been written about the Suhrawardi Sufis' relations with the ruling elites, the focus being invariably drifted towards the Sufis of the Chishti order. The

reasons of this is not far to seek. There is no doubt that the shrine-cult of the Chishti saints has assumed immense important in India since the Mughal times. Whether it is the *dargah* of Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti (d.1236) at Ajmer or the tomb of Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya (d.1325) at Delhi the Chishti shrines enjoy great popularity among the masses even in the present day. Their popular appeal triggers off much of the study about the Chishtis. Apart from the fact that the Chishtis in medieval period endorsed an ideology which carried mass appeal, had a Sufi master of immense spiritual prowess in the form of Nizamuddin Auliya who had unparallel charisma, they had the advantage of their chief hospice located in the capital city whose literacy and cultural traditions spread to the farthest corner of Asia. His sect also had the allegiance of some of the greatest and most devoted poets and chroniclers of the period. Amir Khusrau and Amir Hasan rubbed their forehead on the threshold of Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya and were joined by their younger contemporary, the historian of the Delhi Sultanate, Ziyauddin Barani.[40] The path-breaking admired work of Amir Hasan *Fawai'dul Faud* was a trendsetter. The immediate popular demand which this epic piece of literature inspired a whole series of fabricated *malfuzat* of Nizamuddin's predecessors in the Chishti silsilah. The work of Amir Hasan therefore "brought into being a corpus of literature which however trivial or worthless the contents, continued to circulate as evidence of the singular importance of the Chishti shaikhs in general and of Nizamuddin in particular".[41] Likewise, no other Sufis Shaikh but Nizamuddin Auliya possessed a comparable panegyrist in the form of Amir Khusrau, and a publicist like Ziauddin Barani who time and again testifies to the unique position of Nizamuddin in the religious life of the capital and Sultanate.[42] The saints of the Suhrawardi silsilah or for that matter any other sect, lacked such admirers. With the exception of Jamali, the Suhrawardi fraternity produced no *tazkirat* or *malfuzat* compiler of significance in the thirteenth century. It,

in turn, had an adverse effect on the dissemination of their name and fame when the era of leading Suhrawardi saints passed on. Moreover, the centre of activity of leading Suhrawardi saints and their chief hospice was in Multan, which had been the locale of hectic political activity in the thirteenth and the fourteenth century and frequently ravaged by the invaders. The unstable condition of this city also contributed to the non survival of the Suhrawardi records. The immense state control over the Suhrawardi khanqahs in the Tughluq and the Lodi period can be another factor in disappearance of the Suhrawardi texts.[43] The abundance of Chishti sources in comparison to Suhrawardi texts and the present day popularity of the Chishtis are, therefore, instrumental in attracting the attention of the scholars towards Chishtis in modern times, sidelining to some extent the achievement of the Suhrawardi sect.

However, the scenario in the early thirteenth century was different. During the reign of Iltutmish, the Suhrawardis were good in numbers (also see Appendix D), both at the centre and in periphery of the empire at the North West frontier Province. Apart from the reasons mentioned in section two of this chapter and some general reasons mentioned in section three of appendix D, Iltutmish had certain specific and concrete motives to be close to the Sufis of the Suhrawardi fraternity and maintained cordial relation with these saints. It was an important part of the formulation of his state policy to show kindness towards these pious souls. The Suhrawardis saints welcomed special visitor in their khanqah including the nobility and the traders. We know that Shaikh Zakariya's khanqah was filled with grain and was a popular place for merchants, religious scholars and upper class dignitaries together, while lower class members were not as visible in the Khanqah.[44] Bahauddin Zakariya once himself had remarked, "There are two kinds of people: the common and the elite. I have nothing to do with the common folk.[45] The Suhrawardis were highly interested in shugl (government services) and would accept all kinds of

futuh that came their way. However, the Sufis of Suhrawardi fraternity in Multan, Uchch, Sindh & Delhi were just treading on the footsteps of their predecessors who resided in Baghdad. The ideology followed by them was actually the ideology propounded by Shaikh Najib Suhrawardi (d. 1168) and propagated by Shihabuddin Abu Hafs Suhrawardi (1145-1235)

"Since its early history in Baghdad, the Suhrawardi tariqa maintained the principle of balancing a world embracing Sufi order and practicing tassawuf", writes Qamar ul Huda.[46] Shaikh Najib Abdul Qahir Suhrawardi had intimate relations with the Caliphs of Baghdad. He was even present in some of the coronation ceremonies.[47] He was visited by both the elites and the common people including Caliphs, Sultans, nobles, etc. He acted as the Principal of the Nizamiyah Madrasah for two years. Living decently and well was the principle of Suhrawardi sect. Shaikh Najibuddin used to wear the dress of ulama and ride a camel with great eclat.[48] The traditions of Shaikh Najib were continued by his nephew and khalifa, Shaikh Shahabuddin Abu Hafs Suhrawardi, the real founder of the Suhrawardi order. He preached in Baghdad under Court patronage. In the capacity of Shaikh ul Islam, Shaikh Shahabuddin acted as the poltical- religious advisor and took part in the goal of Abbasid administration to consolidate power in global Islamic politics. Under the administration of Caliph al Nasir (1179-1225), Shaikh Shahabuddin Suhrawardi was sent as envoy, in 1207, to the court of the Ayyubid Sultan al Malik al Adil I Saifuddin (1200-1218) in Egypt; in 1221 to the court of the Khwarazm Shah, Alauddin Muhammad (1200-1220) as well as to the court of the Seljug ruler of Konya Alauddin Kay Qubaz □ (1219-1237).[49] Caliph Nasir had built for the Shaikh and his family luxurious cloister in Baghdad with garden and a bathhouse. The intimacy of Shaikh Suhrawardi with the Caliph and the extent of their relationship could be guage by the fact that the saint decided his work, *Awarif ul Ma'arif* (Knowledge of the learned), a pioneer work to the Sufi *tasawwuf*, and *Kashfan*

ul Nasaih to Caliph al Nasir. This is the sole example of its kind where a Sufi mystic literature was dedicated to a head of the state. These traditions evince the attitude of the Suhrawardi saints in India towards the state and the ruling elites.

The attitude of Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya and other Suhrawardi saints in towards the state in India was, thus, influenced by the ideology of their spiritual master. The presence of nobility, merchants and traders made the Suhrawardi hospice one of the most sought-after Sufi khanqah of the early thirteenth century. The Suhrawardi Sufis obviously enjoyed considerable hold over the nobility and the business class. In the early Sultanate period, the sultan was simply a conqueror surrounding by enemies which included along with the indigenous rulers, even his own compatriots. In such a situation, the chief source of strength of the Sultan was the nobility and the army. The support of the religious class could also not be disregarded, especially in the case of Sultan's struggle against his co- religionist. Iltutmish could not afford the most influential Sufi order of the early thirteen century who also commanded the respect of the nobility. By patronizing the Sufis of the Suhrawardi order, Iltutmish endeavoured to placate the ruling elites of his time and through them sought to maintain the edge over the rest of his competitors. Moreover, Multan where the chief hospice of the Suhrawardi sect was located was strategically as important as Delhi. After overcoming his initial difficulties Iltutmish was also taking steps to consolidate his power and extend the boundaries of his Sultanate. Multan was significant both from the political and economic point of view. Politically, it was major principality of one of the chief rival of Iltutmish, Nasiruddin Qabacha who have captured it after the death of Sultan Qutubuddin Aibak. Economically, Multan was a flourishing city where cotton, the chief item of export in India in the medieval period, was grown and weaved. The region formed an irregular triangle, being enclosed by the Chenab and Satluj, with streams of Ravi and Beas separately

traversing through the area, making the soil alluvial. From the point of human settlement Multan appears to have been better placed than the Sind Sagar Doab in the north-west and the Thar Desert in the south.[50] Besides, the city of Multan had also emerged as a significant entrepot at this time. Being a frontier town, situated at the crossroads, all caravans from either direction stayed there. Multanis played a prominent role in long distance trade in horses, slaves and indigo.[51] These merchants and traders were in continuous touch with the Suhrawardi khanqah and carried their fame to distant parts of the Muslim world. The Suhrawardi saints were therefore highly respected in Central Asia and the fame of Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya spread far and wide. It appears that merchants from Iraq and Khurasan were attracted to him in large numbers.[52] Control over Multan could be economically beneficial for the Sultanate and proximity with the Suhrawardis was expected to help Iltutmish in formulating a sound foreign policy. However, it is plausible that Iltutmish tried to cultivate friendly relations with the Suhrawardis primarily of the political clout their predecessors enjoyed at the court of the Caliph of Baghdad. Shaikh Shihabuddin Suhrawardi commanded a prominent position in the court of the Caliph of Baghdad. Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya was the most favourite of all his disciples on whom the great Shaikh had bestowed his Khilafat in just seventeen days.[53] The *Mir i Multan* was well aware and conscious of his position. He had the ability to use his contracts, reputation and background to assert certain amount of influence and authority. It is evident in the case of Juwaliqs when they gathered outside the Khanqah of Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya and created nuisance. While restraining them not to do so, the Shaikh gave reference to his Sufi background and asserted that it was not of his own accord but at the command of Shaikh Shihabuddin Suhrawardi, he had settled in Multan.[54] In a period when Iltutmish was trying to get the investiture from the Caliph, patronizing the Khalifa of Shaikh Shihabuddin Suhrawardi especially associating himself with

his favorite disciple was perhaps a conscious decision. It bore fruit when in 1229, shortly after the capture of Multan, Iltutmish finally received the investiture from the Caliph of Baghdad.

On their part, the Suhrawardi Sufis were more than willing to accept favours from the Sultan. Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya had his own reasons for currying favour from the Sultan. Acceptance of land grants and accumulation of wealth was all the more necessary for the saint because unlike Delhi, Multan was exposed to outside pressure and foreign invasions. It served as the buffer state between the Delhi Sultan and the Mongols of Transoxiana. To maintain the Suhrawardi khanqah during the periods of adversity required a prudent conservation of resources.[55] On the other hand, relations between Nasiruddin Qabacha and Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya didn't seem cordial. No contemporary or near contemporary writer has mentioned that Qabacha used to visit the khanqah at Multan. Even at the time of Mongol attack at Multan, he pleaded to Khwaja Qutubuddin, who was present in the city at that time, for moral support against the invaders and did not approach Bahauddin Zakariya who was residing there from earlier period.[56] He even requested the Khwaja to stay in Multan. Qabacha was also inclined towards Maulana Qutubuddin Kashani with whom Zakariya had a tussle and held him in great respect and had even constructed a madrasah for him.[57] In the light of these evidences, there was little scope of the success Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya's desire of getting state patronage and achieving the goodwill of the ruler. It would not be out of place to suggest here that the nature and extent of the outreach of Sufi Shaikh also depended upon the kind of relationship the individual Sufis had with political authority. If the political authority was sympathetic towards a Sufi master, the chances of the penetration of his influence were substantially greater than under a ruler who was indifferent. In case of a hostile rule, the prospects of the growth of his khanqah and his following were bound to suffer.[58] Therefore, he looked for the other probable candidate

with whom he could easily cultivate cordial relations and which would also conducive for the development of his khanqah and progress of his order. Qabacha's incessant failure at the hands of Yalduz and then Jalaluddin Mangbarni (d.1224) and the Mongols, and the plunder of Multan thereafter had also irked Bahauddin Zakariya who had an emotional attachment with the city.[59] Qabacha's stood in stark contrast with Iltutmish's success against these elements. Iltutmish's success against Yalduz, tact and diplomacy in case of Mangbarni and policy of dignified aloofness towards Mongols assisted him in scoring points against his rival Qabacha. Even Jalaluddin Mangbarni had asked for help from Iltutmish and had not tried for a pact with Qabacha. It was therefore not surprising that Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya with the connivance of the Qazi of Multan wrote letters to Iltutmish.[60] Jamali gives the name of the qazi as Sharafuddin.[61] Both the letters written by Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya and Qazi Sharafuddin fell into the hands of Nasiruddin Qabacha. While the Qazi was sentenced to death, Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya escaped any punishment at the hands of Qabacha. This happened because Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya was a popular figure in Multan. Any drastic action against him would have led to popular commotion in Multan and increased the tension in the region several folds which Qabacha could not afford at that time. It would have multiplied the problems of Qabacha in the face of Mongol opposition and might have given Sultan Iltutmish a pretext to invade Multan. It was as much due to the spiritual power of the Shaikh as owing to the political expediency on the part of Qabacha that the saint was allowed to go scot-free. It also exhibited the position of Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya in Multan.

The contemporary historians have not mentioned this incident. Neither Hasan Nizami nor Minhaj alluded to it. Isami, the near contemporary historian, has also not referred to it. However, Isami's entire description about the campaign against Nasiruddin Qabacha is erroneous as he

would have us believe that the last campaign against Qabacha took place just after the defeat of Yalduz at the hands of Iltutmish. The earliest source of information for this incident is Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya. He says the following about the episode: "At the time when Qabacha held sway in Multan and Sultan Shamsuddin (Iltutmish) ruled Delhi, an enmity developed between them. Shaykh Bahauddin Zakariya- may God be merciful to him- and the Qazi of Multan both wrote letters to Shamsuddin and both these letters found their way into the hands of Qabacha".[62] Siyarul Arifin narrates the incident in detail while in *Siyar ul Auliya* the incident is mentioned under the heading 'About the caprice of the rulers'. K. A. Nizami is of the view that it was only the pro-Iltutmish feeling of Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya which had incited him (the shaikh) to take such an action. He further says that the Shaikh's sympathy towards Iltutmish was possibly due to the Sultan's early contact with the Suhrawardi saints in Baghdad.[63] Ferishta is of the opinion that Qabacha's failure to enforce the shariah was the cause of estrangement between the two and forced the Shaikh to seek political support from Sultan Iltutmish.[64] However, this viewpoint has not been corroborated by any other source.

The death of Chingez Khan (d.1227) and the presence of an influential leader of the calibre of Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya as a supporter motivated Iltutmish to march towards the cis Indus region. With the situation in his favour, he could hardly allow Qabacha and his territories to be undisturbed. On the first of Rabi- ul Awwal 625 AH/ 1228 AD, Shamsuddin reached the foot of the walls of the fort of Uchch. Around the same time Malik Nasiruddin Aiyitim, Iltutmish's governor at Lahore marched towards Multan. Hostilities continued for months when on 28th of Jamadi Awwal, 625 AH/ 1228 AD, the fort of Uchch surrendered on terms of capitulation. Malik Nasiruddin Aiyitim also succeeded in capturing the fortification of

Multan which he took possession by capitulation (for more on political success of Iltutmish, see chapter three).

While the seize of Multan was in progress, emissaries from the Khalifa's court bringing robes of honour and the investiture for the Sultan reached the limits of Nagore around the month of Ramzan, 625 AH/ 1228 AD. They finally reached Delhi on 22nd of Rabi Awwal, 625 AH/ 1229 AD. Sometime later Iltutmish assigned the post of Shaikh ul Islam to Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya when the post fell vacant after the dismissal of Najmuddin Sughra. Jamali asserts that this post continued to be held the Shaikh's family members until around 1535.[65] For Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya, the post of Shaikh ul Islam meant additional finance for his khanqah in the form of stipends and land grants which led to the expansion of his cloister in Multan. He could now even recommend his favorites to the Sultan, most of who were greatly interested in government jobs at the centre. It was also for the first time that this honour had been given to someone who was residing to a far off place like Multan. All the previous Shaikh ul Islam uptil this period were either residing in Delhi or attached to the Royal Court. The question is what was the need of bestowing this honour on a shaikh who was living in a distant place like Multan? It clearly depicts either the importance of Multan as a frontier province or Shaikh Bahauddin's prestige as a man of God, or both. However, it evinces Iltutmish's policy of providing patronage to another Sufi, this time of Suhrawardi fraternity or to be more precise, to the khalifa of Shaikh Shihabuddin Suhrawardi who, as mentioned earlier, was a close ally of the Caliph of Baghdad. Around this time, when Jalaluddin Tabrizi, another Suhrawardi saint, reached Delhi, he was accorded a warm welcome that was not been given to any other Sufi even of the Suhrawardi order, like Nuruddin Mubarak Ghaznavi or Qazi Hamiduddin Nagori. The sultan personally went out of the city to receive Shaikh Jalaluddin Tabrizi.[66] It is plausible that by paying such special tribute to Shaikh

Tabrizi, the Sultan was expressing his gratitude to the Khalifa for the bestowal of the letter of investiture in the procurement of which Shaikh Shihabuddin might have played a role. According to Qamar ul Huda, "Many critics often emphasize the construction of the largest khanqah in Multan built for Shaikh Zakariya as a gift from the Delhi Sultanate".[67]

The association of Iltutmish with the Suhrawardi Sufis of the capital city, Delhi was also of no mean consequence. Two major khalifas, one ardent disciple and one lesser known khalifa of Shaikh Shihabuddin Suhrawardi are reported to have resided in Delhi during the time of Iltutmish. They either served the ruling house or were patronized by the ruling authority.

One of the aforementioned khalifas of Shaikh Shihabuddin Suhrawardi who lived in Delhi was Shaikh Nuruddin Mubarak Ghaznavi (d. 1235), popularly known as *Mir-i-Delhi* (lord of Delhi).[68] He was appointed as Shaikh ul Islam by Sultan Iltutmish and in that capacity, he frequently visited the court. Like many Suhrawardis, he seems to have been involved in worldly pursuits. Once he had a fight with Shaikh Nizamuddin Abul Mu'wayyid as to who would take the front seat and who the rear one in the presence of Sultan Shamsuddin Iltutmish.[69]

Another important Suhrawardi saint and a major khalifa of Shihabuddin Abu Hafs Suhrawardi who was based in Delhi was Qazi Hamiduddin Nagori. He served as the qazi of Nagore for three years. He was deeply venerated by Sultan Iltutmish. The influence of Qazi Hamiduddin in Sultanate politics during the reign of Iltutmish can be gauged by the support the Qazi gave to the controversial use of sam'a.[70] In the meeting held in the court to discuss this matter, Nagori defended the legality of sam'a and stated that sam'a is prohibited for the ordinary scholar (ahl-i-qal) but it is permissible if the listener is a man of path (ahl-i-hal).[71] His views on this matter were accepted despite the contrary view held by Qazi Sa'ad and Qazi Ima'd, two

muftis who enjoyed favour of the king. It depicts the general esteem in which the Suhrawardi Sufis were held during the reign of Iltutmish and their spiritual prowess to change the attitude of the Sultan. It also illustrates the political sagacity of Iltutmish who preferred the views, on such contentious topic, of a man who was a Sufi and a theologian of high repute (Qazi Nagori was both). He was thus able to control the situation adroitly and prevented the bickering among both the classes (the ulama and the Sufis).

In the same manner, Iltutmish demonstrated his reverence for Shaikh Jalaluddin Tabrizi. When the saint reached Delhi from Baghdad, the Sultan went out of the city to receive him, brought him to his palace and honoured him as royal guest.[72] The actual date of his arrival in Delhi is not known. However, he seems to have arrived in Delhi between 1225-1229/30.[73] In all probability, he appeared in the capital city around or after the capture of Multan, when many other dignitaries like Minhaj and Muhammad Awfi also moved to Delhi on account of Mongol invasion and the impending defeat of Qabacha at the hands of Iltutmish. The extra- warm welcome which Tabrizi had received from Iltutmish bears testimony to the kind of influence the Suhrawardis exercised at the Court and their involvement in the state politics. It so much displeased Najmuddin Sughra, the then Shaikh ul Islam of Delhi that he created such controversy which compelled Shaikh Jalaluddin to leave Hindustan.[74] This amply demonstrates attitude of the ulama towards the Suhrawardi Sufis at the time of Iltutmish.

Another Suhrawardi Sufi and a lesser known disciple of Shaikh Shihabuddin Suhrawardi who enjoyed the patronage of Iltutmish in Delhi was Maulana Majduddin Haji. According to Abdul Haqq Muhaddis Dehlvi (d.1642), he had been appointed as the *sadr i wilayat* by Iltutmish and the Maulana occupied the post for two years.[75]

The foregoing account clearly evinces that quite a number of influential Suhrawardi saints flourished in India during the reign of Iltutmish. They were held in great respect by the Sultan and enjoyed his patronage.

IV

Whether these contacts with the men of piety had any effect on the administration of Delhi or is it anyway affected the policies of Iltutmish? The Sufis and ulama were revered by the Sultan, their opinion were given due weight but the Sultan acted on the basis of his own logical thinking and did what he deemed fit in a particular situation. They were never really allowed to interfere in significant political matters and their orthodox stance seldom entertained. Barani has reported that Nuruddin Mubarak Ghaznavi once tried to exhort the sultan to establish inquisition in India. He, first of all, criticized the kings for not abiding by the principles of shariah in the way they eat, drink and dress themselves and other aspects of their daily life. He then proposed the ways of safeguarding their faith by following four policies: first, the sultan should try to overthrow and uproot practice of idolatry and idolaters. Second, suppression of open display of sins and shameless deeds among the muslim people. Third, God-fearing, pious and religious minded people alone should be employed in governmental services. Fourth, dispensation of justice to the masses be given top priority. These principles alone would guarantee a monarch's place in heaven.[76] It is not clear whether this speech was delivered by Nuruddin Mubarak Ghaznavi or by Barani himself. Modern critics regard it as the personal views of Barani. Whether uttered by Nuruddin Mubarak Ghaznavi or Barani, these words showcase the attitude of a theologian towards the state and his expectations from the king. The Sultan's reaction to such

demands can be gauged from another work of Barani, *Sahifa- i- Na'at- i- Muhammadi*. In the book, it is written that some of the ulama of the Age went to see Iltutmish and requested him to confront the Hindus with the alternative of 'death or Islam'. After interacting with them, the Sultan ordered his wazir to give a suitable reply to the ulama. Nizamul Mulk Junaidi said, "……..at the moment India has newly been conquered and the muslim are so few that they are like salt (in a large dish). If the above orders are to implied to the hindus, it is possible they might combine and a general confusion might ensue and the muslims would be too few in number to suppress this general confusion. However, after a few years when in the capital and in the regions and the small towns the muslim are well- established and the troops are larger, it will be possible to give hindu, the choice of 'death or Islam'".[77] If the speech of Nuruddin Mubarak Ghaznavi (or perhaps Barani) was symbolic of the mindset of the ulama in the medieval period, the political reply of the wazir signifies the stand taken by the Sultan to any such unrealistic or obnoxious demands.

Sunil Kumar opines that Iltutmish's reign can perhaps be compared with the reign of Muhammad Shah Tughlaq (1325-51) in terms of the number of mahzars and demands for *fatawa* against the Musalmans whose conduct or teachings were believed to have been against the tenets of Islam. He further suggests that the Sufis in particular face the brunt of this kind of persecution during Iltutmish's reign. This perception of Iltutmish definitely militates against his popular image of a pious monarch who had special weakness for the Sufis. It is indeed interesting that the Sultan managed to escape censure in the Sufi literature in spite of being an enforcer of shariah and regulator of religious practices. Sunil Kumar provides the answer by stating that the Delhi Sultan was never directly involved with the regulative functions of the qazi or the shaikh- ul-Islam. Once chosen, the alim functioned according to the Shariah, the Sultan intervening only to

curb excesses.[78] This statement, in my opinion, is partially true. It is true that Iltutmish was not involved in any such exercise. But he escaped criticism in Sufi literature for other reasons. As far as Suhrawardi sources are concerned, they could not criticize him as all major Sufis of this fraternity in the thirteenth century were connected to the Ruling House and were patronized by Iltutmish. It was a Shariah- abiding order and the image of Iltutmish as an enforcer of Shariah could not bring criticism but appreciation from this order. For the Chishtis sources, it can be said that the Chishtis assigned equal importance to social work and public welfare. Iltutmish's construction activities, particularly the building of Hauz-i-Shamsi has won the admiration of the Chishtis. Nizamuddin Auliya himself was full of praise for this benevolent measure. Moreover, Iltutmish's attitude towards the Chishti saint Khwaja Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki in particular and towards Sufis and dervishes in general, was highly respectful. Personally he showed great reverence for pious men. In addition, no matter how many cases were brought against them, the Sufis were always acquitted by the court. Therefore, there was no reason why Iltutmish would be criticized in Sufi treatises. Apart from these factors, it should also be kept in mind that most of the Sufi literatures narrating these incidents have been written in the fourteen century or beyond. It was a period when the Sufi state relations were tense. Hence, in order to remind to Sultan as to how a sovereign should behave with a Sufi shaikh, these anecdotes were related. There could be no other monarch better than Iltutmish who had this image of being benevolent, kind and deferential towards the Sufis and pious men, including ulama. Those who were writing these *tazkirah* were in awe of their spiritual masters about whom they were writing and thus out of respect for their master they provided a didactic narrative, wherever required.

V

It can therefore, be concluded that Iltutmish was a kind hearted and altruist monarch with a mystic bent of mind. He was polite and considerate towards his subjects. His approach to the Sufi shaikhs as well as the ulama was full of reverence and admiration. However, apart from having mystical leanings, there were several other reasons, more political than spiritual, which obliged Iltutmish to maintain cordial relations with the Sufi saints. His interest in mysticism had in fact helped him in his pursuits. Whether it was his inclination towards Khwaja Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki or his association with the Suhrawardi saints, all were motivated by his desire of consolidation of the empire and making Delhi a paramount power in the sub continent. He was a clever politician. The exigencies of his time and the kind of political rivals he had, persuaded him to follow a policy which would ensure the support not only of the nobility but of the religious class as well. At that time, empathy with both these classes was essential to make the position of the Sultan unassailable. Iltutmish adhered to the policy of recruiting as many religious men as required for the efficiency of the administration. Though the Chishti saints were reluctant to take up government job, the Suhrawardi assisted him completely in his goal. Khwaja Bakhtiyar Kaki was a popular figure in Delhi during the early thirteenth century and Iltutmish could not afford to him and that too, in the seat of his Empire. Similarly, the Suhrawardi sect was the chief order of India in the first half of the thirteenth century. In addition, the ideology they followed did not deter them from looking for state patronage and government service. They were admired among the moneyed class and high administrative officials. By patronizing these saints, Iltutmish endeavoured to placate the ruling elite of his time. Moreover the connection of the Suhrawardi saints, particularly Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya, with Shaikh Shihabuddin Suhrawardi who in turn was closely associated with the Caliph of Baghdad perhaps helped Iltutmish in acquiring the investiture from the Caliph in 1229. In his objective of gaining the

goodwill of the men of religion, Iltutmish used the position of shaikh ul Islam which he bestowed upon several men of this category in order to curry their favour. Both sufis and ulama were appointed to this post. But they were not allowed to meddle in political affairs and exploit a situation in their own interest. In fact, it required a great deal of sagacity on the part of the Sultan to maintain equilibrium between assimilating them in the administration and actually not allowing them to turn the course or action in their favour and Iltutmish succeeded in this task marvelously. Besides his Age, he has been represented by the Sufi hagiographers of the 14th- 15th century as the quintessence of the upright monarch and how a sovereign ought to behave with men of piety. In addition, his public welfare activities like the construction of Hauz i Shamsi won him acclaim even in later period and from Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya himself. While referring to the sweetness and benefit of water from the Royal Reservoir, he remarked that some people reported that in a dream after his death they had seen Sultan Shamsuddin who reported that God had been merciful to him (the Sultan) on account of this reservoir.[79] It was in fact the adroitness and politically correct measures of Iltutmish that made him perhaps the only Sultan of Delhi who had been applauded by the chroniclers and the Sufi hagiographers alike.

NOTES:

[1] Minhaj-i-Siraj Juzjani, *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri* , translated into English by Major H. G. Raverty (Calcutta: The Asiatic Society, 1995; first published, 1881), vol. I, p. 600. All references from *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri* in this chapter have been taken from Raverty's translation.

[2] *Tabaqat-i-*Nasiri, vol. I, p. 600

[3] Ibid, p. 600

[4] Isami, *Futuh al Salatin*, translated into English by Agha Mahdi Husain (London: Asia Publishing House, 1977), vol. II, p.232; Khwaja Nizamuddin Ahmed, *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, translated into English by Brajendra Nath De (Delhi: Low Price Publications, 1992, first publication, 1911), vol. I. p. 71

[5] Hamid bin Fazlullah Jamali Kamboh, *Siyar ul Arifin*, translated into Urdu by Muhammad Ayub Qadri (Lahore: Urdu Science Board, 1989; first published, 1976), p. 157. All references from *Siyar ul Arifin* in this chapter have been taken from Ayub Qadiri's translation.

[6] Ibid, p. 157

[7] Amir Hasan Sijzi, *Fawa'idul Fu'ad*, translated into English by Bruce B. Lawrence (New York: Paulist Press, 1992), p. 318. All references from *Fawa'idul Fu'ad* in this chapter have been taken from Bruce Lawrence's translation except footnote 69.

[8] K. A. Nizami, 'Iltutmish, the mystic', *Islamic Culture*, vol. XX, nos. 1-4, 1946,p. 169

[9] *Fawa'idul Fu'ad,* p. 314

[10] Ibid, p. 318

[11] Ibid, p. 318

[12] K. A. Nizami, op. cit., p. 170

[13] Muhammad Habib and K. A. Nizami, *A Comprehensive History of India, vol. V, part I: The Delhi Sultanate (1206-1526)*(New Delhi: People's Publishing House, 1996, first publication, 1970), p.229

[14] *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, p. 71

[15] *Fawa'idul Fu'ad*, p. 319

[16] *Tabaqat-i-*Nasiri, vol. I, p. 619

[17] Ibid, pp. 619-620

[18] Ibid, p. 236

[19] About ten millions (not clear whether tankah or jital) is said to be spent for this purpose, *Tabaqat-i-*Nasiri, vol. I, p. 598

[20] *Futuh al Salatin*, p. 228-229

[21] *Siyal ul Arifin*, p. 35

[22] Ibid, p. 221

[23] *Tabaqat-i-*Nasiri, vol. I, p. 600- 601

[24] Ibn-i-Battuta, *Rehla* (The Travels Of Ibn-i-Battuta), translated into English by H. A. R. Gibb, Cambridge, 1971 (reprint), vol. III, p. 33

[25] Muzaffar Alam, *The Language of Political Islam in India c.1200- 1800* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2004), p. 84

[26] Richard M. Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier 1204-1760* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, sixth edition, 2010; first Indian publication, 1994), p. 30

[27] RadheyShyam, Presidential Address, *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, forty-fifth session, 1984, p. 251

[28] *Futuh al Salatin*, p. 227

[29] Ibid, p.226

[30] Ibid, p. 227

[31] *Tabaqat-i-*Nasiri, vol. I, p. 598-599

[32] *Siyal ul Arifin*, p. 26; N. R. Farooqi, *Medieval India: Essays on Sufism, Diplomacy and History* (Allahabad: Laburnum Press, 2006), p. 71

[33] *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, pp. 69-70

[34] Shaikh ul Islam was not a permanent position like Sadr us Sudur or Qazi ul Quzat. The Sultans of DELHI conferred the title on religious dignitaries as an honour and recipients obtained both stipends and land. The post could be offer to more than one person at a time. Incumbents were not obliged to be in constant attendance at court and offered only occasional advice to their rulers. Some also took active interest in politics. Some Sufi authorities themselves gave the title to outstanding Sufis, thus indicating their supreme status. See Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi, *History of Sufism in India* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1978), vol. I, p.192

[35] *Siyal ul Arifin*, p. 28

[36] Ibid, pp. 29-30; Amir Khurd, *Siyar ul Auliya*, translated into Urdu by Ijaz ul Haqq Quddoosi (Lahore: Urdu Science Board,1996), pp. 139-140. All references from *Siyar ul Auliya* in this chapter have been taken from Quddoosi's translation.

[37] *Siyal ul Arifin*, p. 38; K. A. Nizami, *Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India during the Thirteenth Century* (New Delhi: Asia Publishing House, 1961), p. 213

[38] *Siyar ul Auliya*, pp.138-139

[39] K. A. Nizami, 'Iltutmish, the mystic', p. 176

[40] Simon Digby, 'The Sufi Shaikh as a source of Authority in Medieval India' in Richard M. Eaton (ed.) *India's Islamic Traditions,711-1750* (New Delhi:Oxford University Press, n.d), pp. 251-252

[41] Ibid, p. 252

[42] Ibid, p. 253

[43] Qamar ul Huda, *Striving for Divine Union: Spiritual Exercises for Suhrawardi Sufis* (London: Rouledge Curzon, 2003) p. 112

[44] S. A. A. Rizvi, op. cit., p. 191

[45] *Fawa'idul Fu'ad*, p. 238

[46] Qamar ul Huda, op. cit., p. 114

[47] K. A. Nizami, 'The Suhrawardi silsilah and its influence on Medieval Indian Politics', *Medieval India Quarterly,* 1957, p.117

[48] Ibid, p.117

[49] Qamar ul Huda, op. cit., p. 14; Anna Suvorova, *Muslim Saints of South Asia (eleventh to fifteenth centuries),* translated from Russian into English by M. Osam'a Farooqi (London: Rouledge Curzon, 2004), p.133

[50] Humaira Arif Dasti, 'Path of Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya: A Contrastive Mode of Mysticism' in Surinder Singh and Ishwar Dayal Gaur (ed.), *Sufism in Punjab: Mystics, Literature and Shrines* (Delhi: Aakar Books, 2009), p. 82

[51] Ibid, p. 82

[52] S. A. A. Rizvi, op. cit., p. 191

[53] *Fawa'idul Fu'ad*, p. 129-130; *Siyal ul Arifin*, p. 147-148

[54] Ibid, p. 136

[55] Simon Digby, op. cit., p. 244

[56] *Siyal ul Arifin*, p. 25; *Siyar ul Auliya*, p.135; *Fawa'idul Fu'ad*, p. 205

[57] *Siyal ul Arifin*, p. 176

[58] I. A .Zilli, 'The saints and his audience – A Study of the Chishti Outreach under Shaikh Nizamuddin Awliya' in A. K. Sinha and S. Z. H. Jafri (ed) *Conversations in Indian History* (New Delhi: Anamika Publishers and Distributors (P) Limited, 2010), p. 101

[59] Once the governor of Multan needed grain and requested the Shaikh to supply grain grain from his granary. Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya ordered a stack of grain to be sent to him along with a flask full of silver coins, [59] *Fawa'idul Fu'ad*, p. 330; *Siyal ul Arifin*, p. 159

[60] *Fawa'idul Fu'ad*, p. 219; *Siyal ul Arifin*, p. 157; *Siyar ul Auliya*, pp. 875-876

[61] *Siyal ul Arifin*, p. 157

[62] *Fawa'idul Fu'ad*, p. 219

[63] K. A. Nizami, 'The Suhrawardi silsilah and its influence on Medieval Indian Politics', p. 120

[64] Ibid, p.121; Qamar ul Huda, p. 119

[65] *Siyal ul Arifin*, p. 247

[66] Ibid, p. 241

[67] Qamar ul Huda, op. cit., p. 141

[68] Abdul Haqq Muhaddis Dehlvi, *Akhbar ul Akhyar*, translated into Urdu by Muhammad Muneer Raza Qadri (Lahore: Shabbeer Brothers, n.d.), p. 80. All references from *Akhbar al Akhyar* in this chapter have been taken from Qadri's translation.

[69] Amir Hasan Sijzi, *Fawa'idul Fu'ad*, translated into English by Ziya ul Hasan Faruqi (New Delhi: D. K. Printwood (P) Ltd., 1996) p. 353

[70] Sam'a means audition. The use of music/ musical instruments crept into it at a later date during the sam'a was an issue of dispute between the Sufis and the ulama.

[71] *Futuh al Salatin*, pp. 231-232

[72] *Siyal ul Arifin*, p. 241

[73] The Mongols laid seize in Multan in the late winter of 621 AH /1224 AD. See *Tabaqat-i-*Nasiri, vol. I, p. 539; Peter Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate: A Political and Military History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 34. At that time, Shaikh Tabrizi was in Multan along with Khwajah Bakhtiyar Kaki. See *Fawa'idul Fu'ad*, p. 205; *Siyal ul Arifin*, p. 25; *Siyar ul Auliya*, p. 135. The siege continued for forty two days. Khwajah Baktiyar Kaki moved to Delhi after this campaign. Therefore, he proceeded to Delhi perhaps in 1225. It is reported that Shaikh Tabrizi at the same time moved to Ghazni. See *Siyal ul Arifin*, p. 26 Bakhtiyar Kaki initially did not reside in Delhi and took up residence in Kilokheri due to the shortage of water supply in the city. Jamali writes that on account of the request of Iltutmish to live in the capital itself, Bakhtiyar Kaki returned back and settled in Delhi. Ibid, pp. 26-27

However, it was after the construction of the tank in 1229 that the problem of water supply in the city improved considerably. This might have motivated the Khwaja to relocate himself to Delhi. The fact that the Khwaja took up his residence close to the tank indicates that the movement of the saint to Delhi was carried out post the erection of Hauz-i-Shamsi, i.e., post 1229. We know that at the time of the arrival of Jalaluddin Tabrizi to India when he first met the Shaikh, Bakhtiyar Kaki was still living at the outskirts of Katehr district (near Kilokheri). Refer to *Fawa'idul Fu'ad*, p. 253; *Siyal ul Arifin*, p. 242 It is also evident that Khwaja Bakhtiyar Kaki came to Delhi prior to the arrival Shaikh Jalaluddin Tabrizi. Therefore, the date of the arrival of Jalaluddin Tabrizi in Delhi can be fixed sometime between 1225- 1229.

[74] *Fawa'idul Fu'ad*, p.245-246 ; *Siyal ul Arifin*, pp. 244-245

[75] *Akhbar ul Akhyar,* pp. 137-138; K. A. Nizami, 'The Suhrawardi silsilah and its influence on Medieval Indian Politics', p. 122. In *Akhbar ul Akhyar*, the term used for the post of Majduddin Haji is *wazir i intezamaat*. However, K. A. Nizami have used the term *sadr i wilayat* which seems more appropriate. A religious festival known as *Khatm i Maulana Majd Haji* used to be held in Delhi in his memory every year.

[76] Ziyauddin Barani, *Tarikh- i- Firuzshahi*, translated into Urdu by Sayyid Moin ul Haqq (Lahore: Urdu Science Board, 2004), pp. 96-99. Extract also quoted in K. A. Nizami, 'The Suhrawardi silsilah and its influence on Medieval Indian Politics', p. 124; Qamar ul Huda, op. cit., p. 122

[77] Ziyauddin Barani, *Sahifa- i- Na'at- i- Muhammadi,* extract translation in S. Nurul Hasan, 'Sahifa- i- Na'at- i- Muhammadi of Ziauddin Barani', *Medieval India Quarterly* 1 (1950), p. 102

[78] Sunil Kumar, *The Emergence of the Delhi Sultanate* (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2007), pp. 234-235

[79] *Fawa'idul Fu'ad*, p. 218

CHAPTER EIGHT

Cultural Attainments: Building Art and Literary Activities

Mughal architecture is the product of innovative genius that borrowed from Indian, Timurid and even European sources… However, to imagine, as many do, that Mughal architecture was the first to make extensive use of indigenous motifs along with standard Islamic forms- for example, domes and arches- is to overlook the heritage bequeathed to them by earlier Indo-Islamic dynasties.[1]

Catherine B. Asher

A monarch's accomplishments are measured not in terms of military triumphs alone; cultural attainments play an equally significant role in determining his overall achievements and legacy to the posterity. Cultural attainments of a state or a country are best reflected in its building art, literature, education system, painting, music etc. which not only mirror its cultural heritage but also contribute to the growth of the region's civilization in general. The present chapter attempts to assess the achievements of Iltutmish primarily in the field of architecture, literature and education.

I

Architecture is the most dominant and visible form of a state's cultural heritage and constitutes one of its most important legacies to future generations. We know that the pre-

Turkish architecture in India was predominantly religious in nature. Temples of various shapes and sizes were built for the purpose of worship. The principal construction style used was the trabeate in which buildings were designed or constructed of horizontal beams or lintel. Thus a simple horizontal and vertical arrangement of the pillars and architraves was the singular feature of the Indian architecture. The Indian style was dependant on sculptured and dressed stone. It was meant to serve a religious system of formal imagery and symbolism whose tradition of exclusiveness required small shrines, remote and almost forbiddingly dark, within a mass of pillared and bracketed corridors and antechambers.[2] Brackets and narrow columns were an important part of the construction. Use of sculpture to decorate building was an integral part of Indian architecture. The constructional technique of Indian buildings as well as many of its decorative pattern and style was not suitable for the wide and lofty halls required for Muslim congregational prayers. The Indian system was certainly inadequate for roofing large spaces.

By the time the Turks arrived in India, the Muslim architectural style had already crystallized into definite forms. The Muslim introduced in India the concept of arch, Minar and the dome. The dome provided the desired scale without excessively adding to the weight of the understructure. In the indigenous architecture, space was usually spanned by beams which were placed horizontally. The Muslims introduced the techniques of building arches to span the space between the pillars or walls. The arch can carry much heavier weights than pillars supporting horizontal slabs.[3] Calligraphy, use of geometric patterns, floral reliefs etc. were essential parts of the decorative techniques in Muslim buildings.

When the Turkish Empire was established in India, these two civilizations: Islamic and Indian came face to face with each other. Among other things, it led to a happy blending of the elements of both styles of architecture simply because the builders were Turks and supervisors

were many a times Khurasanis and Central Asian but the labourers and craftsmen, particularly during the Early Sultanate Period, were Indian. While working out the techniques and scheme of the Turks, they interpreted the details in their own understanding of the art. It led to the emergence of Muslim art in Indian style and design. Suffice is to say that the building art in medieval India reflects the assimilation of both the indigenous and foreign styles and hence appropriately known as the Indo-Islamic style of Architecture.

II

Iltutmish built many monuments in Delhi, the capital city. He also refurbished and completed at least two major monuments that have been left incomplete by Aibak. As the face and principal metropolis of the Sultanate, Delhi required building commensurate to its status and importance as also to exhibit the wealth and power of the Turkish Empire in India. With this end in view, the Sultan saw to it that his capital is adorned with sumptuous and splendid edifices.

The Qutb Minar

The most important building completed by Iltutmish in Delhi was the Qutb Minar. One of the most notable buildings in the architectural complex of the early Jami Masjid of Delhi, this Minar is a tapering shaft, 234 feet and 11 inches high, with a base diameter of 47 feet and 3 inches and upper diameter of 9 feet and consists of five stories at present. Each storey terminates into a decorative balcony adorned with foliated designs. The earliest date found on the Qutb Minar is 1199 AD.

The ground floor of the Qutb Minar is a polygon of 24 facets having a height of 95 feet and 1 inch and is build of fine red sandstone. The facade of the Minar is formed by alternate angular and semi circular flutes. The second storey is 50 feet 6 inches high and is decorated with

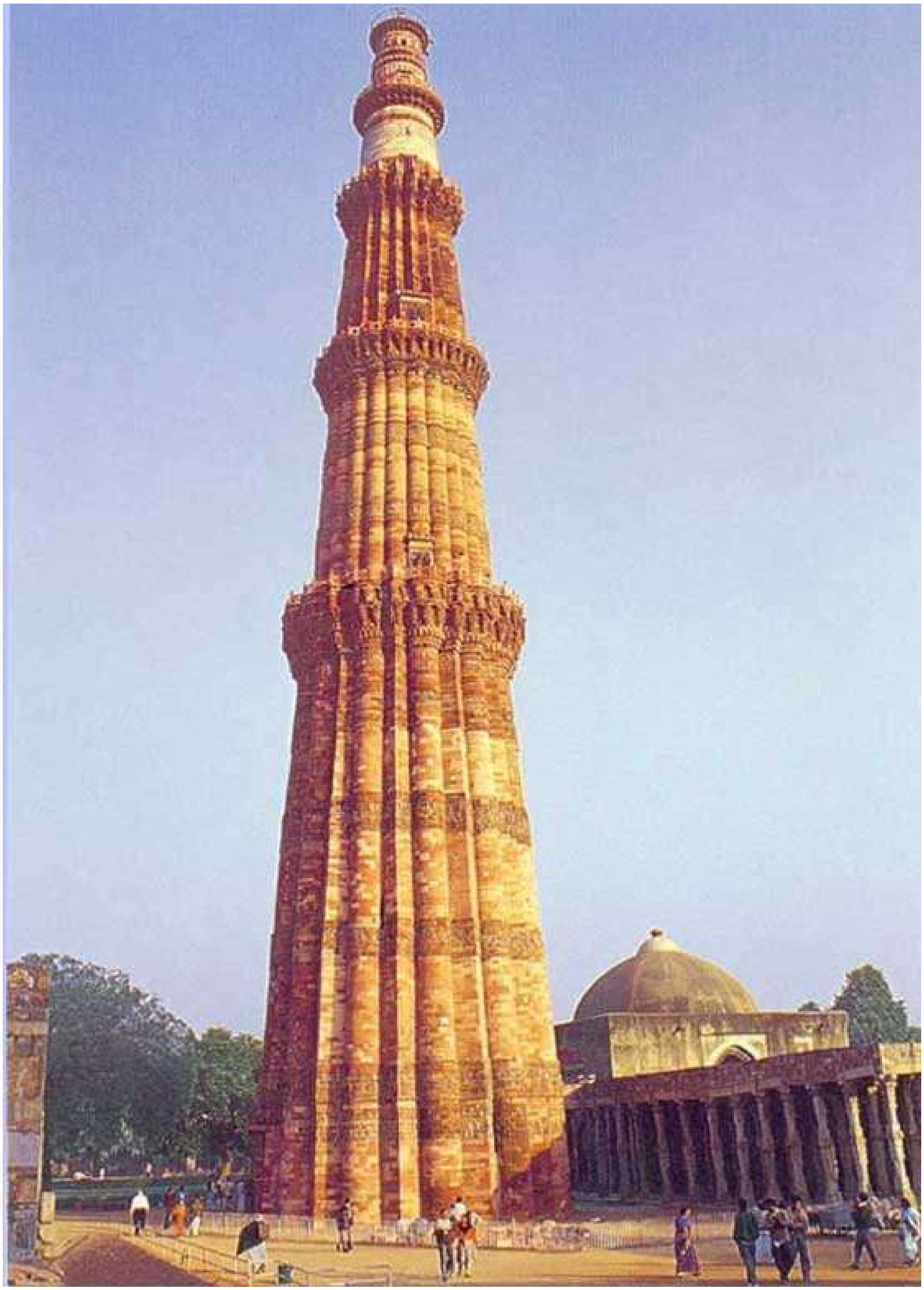


Figure 1: The Qutb Minar (courtesy: google)

semi circular flutes. The third has a height of 40 feet 9 inches and is again decorated with angular fluting. These first three stories are built of red sandstone though not entirely of the same colour. In the first and second storey, the stones are pinkish buff and in the third, dark red. The fourth storey which is 25 feet 4 inches is embossed with marble and in some places with red sandstone. Unlike the lower stories, it is round and devoid of flutings. The fifth or the last storey is 22 feet 11 inches[4] and is circular in style. Like the fourth storey, both marble and red-stone has been used here. On the top of this storey was an iron railing fixed with iron cramp and lead, with brass kerb set on the railing. The cupola (added by Firuz Shah Tughluq), which was in existence in 1794, added 12 feet and 10 inches to the height of the Minar but in 1803, it was thrown down by an earthquake.[5] The cupola is said to have been in the form of a harp.

The construction of the Minar was initiated by Qutbuddin Aibak and the first storey was built during his reign. The second, third and fourth stories were, according to the inscriptions found on the monument, constructed under the patronage of Sultan Iltutmish. The fifth storey was constructed, after elaborate repair of the fourth storey which was damaged by lightening, during the reign of Firuz Shah Tughluq (1351-88). The author of *Futuhat- i Firuz Shahi* writes that 'The Minaret built by Sultan Mu'izuddin Sam, destroyed by a stroke of lightening was renovated so that it become better than it used to be and it was also raised higher.'[6] An inscription in Nagari script found on the 3rd balcony of Qutb Minar provides the same information. The epigraph says that on Thursday, the 15th day of the dark fortnight of Phalgun in the year Samvat 1425 (1369 A.D.) lightning fell. The (monument) was (then) repaired in the year Samvat 1425. The architects were Nana, Satha, Lola and Lakshmana.[7] The Minar is situated within the Quwwatul Islam (might of Islam) mosque complex. The purpose of its construction was twofold. First, it was conceived as a tower of victory and was to serve as the most visible

symbol of Turkish victory in India. Second, it was to serve the purpose of a mazinah (tower) whence the muezzin (public crier) called the faithful to the five daily prayers at the appointed hours.[8] Isami was full of praise for the Minar and writes that 'a Minaret stood in that bright mosque (Jama Masjid), like the Tuba in paradise.'[9] It lies huge and tall against the southern wall of the mosque.

The Minar is decorated with inscriptions in embossed naskh letters. Most of the epigraphs appear on the bands which run across each storey of the Minar. These bands are placed in a horizontal position to the ground. The style and disposition of the script suggest that the designers of these inscriptions were either Khurasanis or Khurasan trained calligraphers, who also designed the inscription elsewhere in the Jami complex and in the Jami Masjid of Ajmer that was built around the same time.[10] On the first storey, constructed by Aibak and patronized by Mu'izuddin Muhammad Ghori, the epigraphs appear in six bands. The first or lowest band has been almost completely damaged by the ignorant restores and from whatever is readable, it is not possible to determine the particular chapter of the Quran from where the verses concerned might have been taken. A fragment of a Persian historical inscription refers to "the amir, the commander of the army, the glorious, the great.''[11] In a comparatively recent article, the author has suggested that verses from two chapters of the Quran (6: 11 and 13: 1) have been inscribed on the lowest band.[12] On the second band, two inscriptions have been deciphered. The first is taken from the Surah al Hashr (Quran, 59: 22) referring to God's uniqueness and omniscience and the second is an Arabic inscription referring to Mu'izuddin Muhammad Ghori. The inscription on the third band is taken from Surah al Fath (Quran, 48:1-6). The fourth band contains an Arabic epigraph in prose praising Ghiyasuddin Muhammad Ghori. The epigraph on the fifth band consists of two verses from chapter 59(22-23) followed by ninety nine Arabic names of the Almighty. The sixth

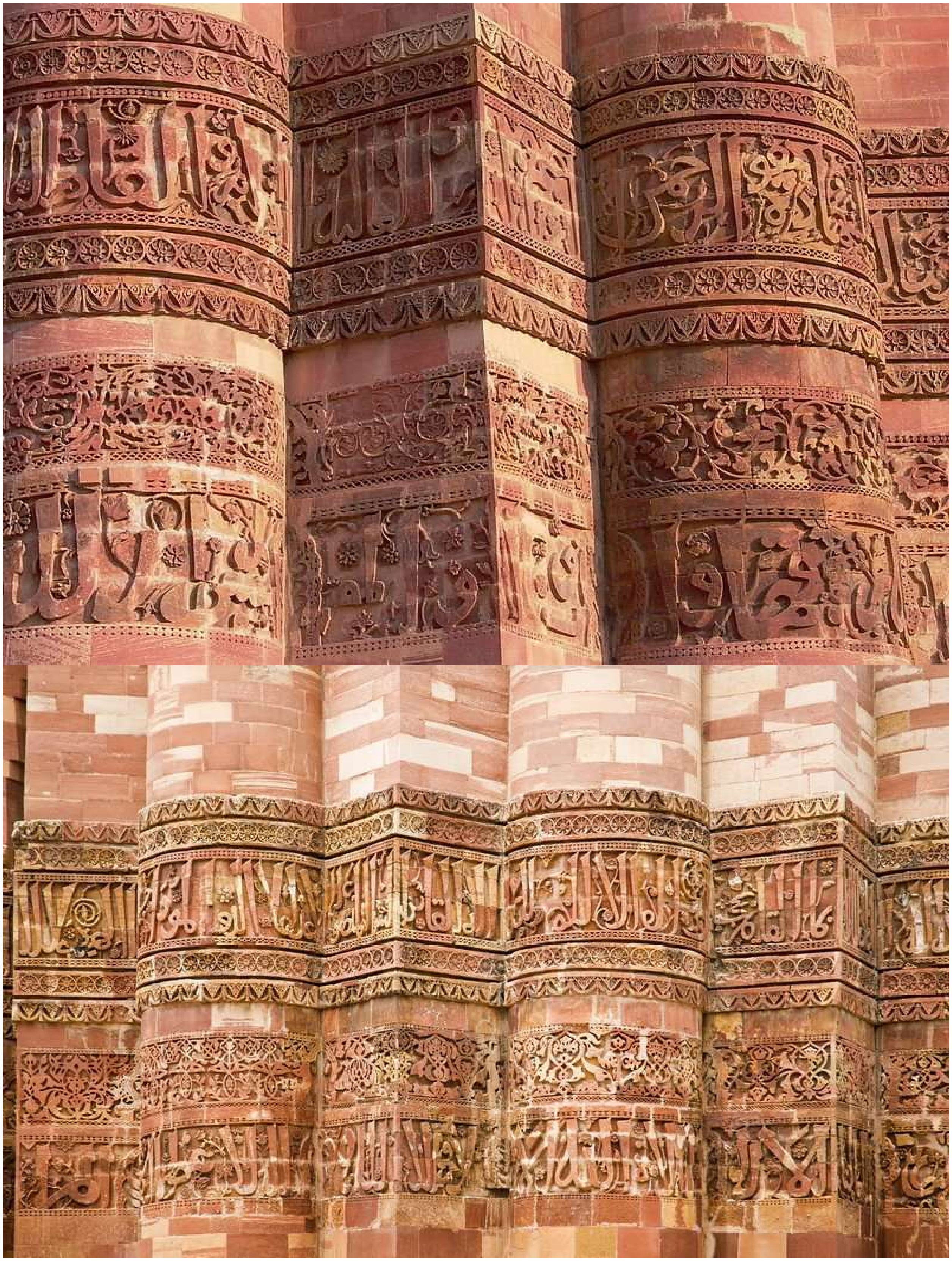


Figure-2: Engravings on the Qutb Minar (courtesy: google)

band have been taken from Surah al Baqara (Quran 2: 255-60). On the entrance doorway it is written that “The Prophet, may Allah bless and assoil him said, ‘Whoever built a mosque for the most High Allah got a house similar to it built for him in paradise by Allah.’[13] This is followed by a historical inscription in Persian prose which records the renovation done during the reign of Sikandar Lodi (r.1489 – 1517) in 1503 A.D.[14] Near the entrance doorway is a mutilated Persian inscription in prose containing only the name of one Fazal Abul Ma’ali but the nature of man’s association with the Minar is known.[15] Carr Stephen however suggests that according to the inscription he was the mutawalli (care taker) of the Minar.[16]

It is the second, third and fourth storey the credit of the construction of which goes to Sultan Iltutmish. There are two bands which run across the second storey. The lower band of the storey is an epigraph in Arabic prose which recounts the name, titles and virtues of Iltutmish in the following words: The most exalted sultan, the great emperor, the lord of the necks of the people , the pride of the kings of Arabia and Persia, the shadow of God in the world, Shams al Dunya wa’l Din, the help of Islam and the Muslims, the crown of kings and sultans… in the worlds, the grandeur of the victorious government, the majesty of the shining religion, helped from the heavens, victorious over his enemies, the bright meteor of the sky of the caliphate, the propagator of justice and kindness, the guard of the kingdoms of the world and the proclaimer of the word of the High God , Abu’l Muzaffar Iltutmish al Sultani, the helper of the Prince of the faithful, may God perpetuate his Kingdom and rule and increase his power and rank.[17] On the upper band of the second storey, we find the last two Quranic inscriptions on the Minar. The first is taken from the Surah Ibrahim (14: 29-30). Like the religious inscriptions of the basement storey, it underlines Allah’s omnipotence and the pain and anguish awaiting disbelievers and those who are engrossed in shirk (polytheism). The second epigraph has been taken from the Surah al-Juma (Quran, 62: 9-10) and reads as follows: O! True believers, when ye are called to prayer on the Day of Assembly, hasten to the commemoration of God, and leave merchandising…The reward which is with God is better than any sport or

merchandise, and God is the best provider.[18] This inscription strongly suggests that the Minar was used as a mazinah at least from Iltutmish's period onwards.

The religions inscriptions engraved on the second storey targeted both the audiences: the unbelievers and the believers. On the doorway in this storey is an historical inscription in Arabic prose recording the completion of the fabric under the orders of Iltutmish: The completion of this building was commanded by the king who is helped from the heavens (named) SHAMS U-L-HAQWA-D-DIN ILTUTMISHA-L-QUTBI, the helper of the king of the faithful.[19] The third storey is ornamented with two bands. The upper one contains a scroll and the lower an inscription. The inscription bears no religious quotation but an undated historical epigraph in Arabic prose containing the name and titles of Sultan Iltutmish, like the lower band of the second storey (see above). On the doorway of the third storey, another Arabic inscription of similar nature is found. Near the doorway in the same storey, a small inscription in Arabic prose recorded the completion of the Minar under the supervision of one Muhammad Amir Koh.[20] The fourth storey is decorated with four ornamental bands on one of which again was inscribed an epigraph praising Iltutmish. An Arabic inscription in prose on the door assigned the erection of the colossal building to Iltutmish. The fifth storey has no religious epigraphs as well. However, a historical epigraph in Persian prose is found on the door recording the repairs to this storey executed by Firuz Shah Tughluq after it had been damaged by lightening in 770 AH/ 1368-69 AD.

The construction of the Qutb Minar was in keeping with the tradition among the Muslims of erecting such columns for the embellishment of their cities. The ultimate origin of these towers is found in Sassanian structures. The alternate rounded and angular fluting is undoubtedly a development of the polygonal outline of the Ghazni example. The wide encircling bands (like those in the Minar of Jam) in Naskh afford a delicate relief to the plain fluted masonry. The



Figure-3: General view of balconies with stalactite corbelling, showing also the Iron Pillar (courtesy: google)



Figure-4: Balconies with stalactite corbelling, close-view (courtesy: google)

balconies at every stage are supported on an early type of stalactite corbelling, which represents a universal characteristic of the Muslim architectural decoration such as found in the Al- Hamra palace in Spain.[21] Unlike the Quwwatul Islam Mosque to which we will turn shortly, the decoration of the Qutb Minar was consistently Muslim in character.

In 1803, the Minar was hit by an earthquake which destroyed the additional cupola built by Firuz Shah Tughluq. Major Smith, an engineer, repaired the affected parts of the Minar. He replaced Firuz Shah's pavilion at the top of the tower with his own pavilion. In 1829, the report of the Committee constituted by the then government to examine the repairs done to the Qutb Minar referred to the history of the cupola and of the "grotesque ornament" which Major Smith substituted in its place.[22] This new pavilion by Smith was removed in 1848 by the orders of Lord Harding and it now stands between the Dak Bungalow and the Minar in the garden.

At present, the Qutb Minar is included in list of the Protected Monuments of the Archeological Survey of India and is well looked after. Nevertheless, it has not escaped the brunt of trespassers and encroachers. The Archeology Department is supposed to take action for unauthorized activity on the land falling within certain limits of historical monuments but they have, to an extent, failed. Development of Christian Colony near Qutb Minar is one such example where a colony has come up near Qutb Minar within the restricted area but the Archeological Department did not do anything.[23] If this could happen to the monument of national stature which is visited by thousands of Indian and foreigner, one could well imagine the plight of the other smaller edifices of India of various historical periods which is surrounded by the unauthorized residential and commercial areas.

Quwwatul Islam Mosque

The first structure that the Turks built in India was the Islamic place of worship or mosque. The ardent need of procuring a place to offer the daily five times prayer for the soldiery and the civilians was too obvious. Qutbuddin Aibak therefore constructed the mosque, known as Quwwatul Islam Masjid, immediately after his conquest of Delhi in 1192 AD.[24] The mosque was situated in the Lal Kot area of Delhi which subsequently came to be known as the Mehrauli area.

The principal gateways of Qutbuddin's original mosque were located on the east and north side of the structure. According to a Persian inscription on the eastern side, the fort of Lal Kot was conquered and the mosque was built in 587 AH/ 1191-92 AD by Qutbuddin Aibak who was the commander of the army. According to a report, the debris of twenty seven temples which were lying around the site and on each of which 20 lacs Dehliwals had been spent was used in the mosque. An inscription on the eastern side dated 1197 describes Mu'izuddin Muhammad Ghori as its patron. The mosque was completed in 1199 AD. The structure stands on a raised plinth[25] and is made of red sandstone. From the outside it is a somber heavy looking square stone building. Built in the shape of a simple rectangle enclosing a central quadrangular court, the mosque measures some 214 feet by 149 feet externally. The prayer chamber on the west is four bays in depth. The eastern colonnade is of three bays and the colonnades on the north and south have two bays each. The despoiled temple materials were re-assembled by Hindu artisans to meet the demands of their Muslim masters. Column shafts, bases, capitals, etc. from damaged temples were assembled, with no regard to fitness or symmetry, to erect pillars in support of the roof. Sculptured figures roughly mutilated or covered with plasters and ornament of unoffending geometrical pattern was also utilized.

One of the most interesting features of the mosque is the stone screen erected on the west side of the mosque's courtyard in order to provide an imposing façade for the mosque's qibla.

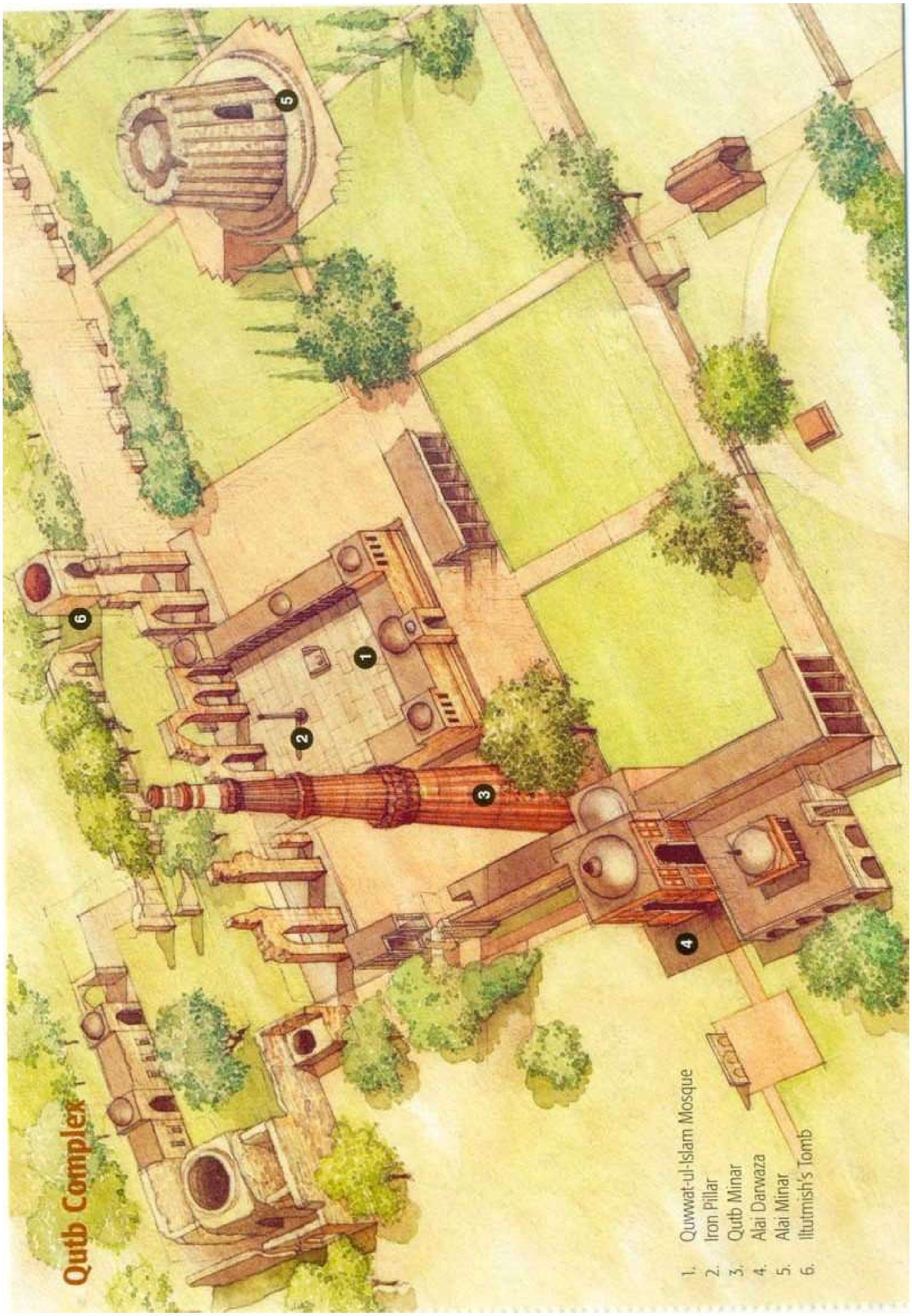


Figure-5: A Bird's Eye view of the Qutb Complex (courtesy: google)



Figure-6: The arched screen of Quwwatul Islam Mosque, now in ruins (courtesy: google)

Qutbuddin erected this screen in 1199 AD. It was later enlarged by Iltutmish. The screen Qutbuddin constructed has a high central arch flanked on each side by two lower arches. Located 10.2 meters from the qibla wall and immediately in front of its central and largest arch is the famous Iron Pillar, cast in the fourth century. On the south side of the face of central arch, A. H. 594 (1198-99) is inscribed. Many epigraphs adorn the screen. Contrary to the inscription of the Qutb Minar which laid emphasis on the punishment awaiting non-believers, the epigraphs on the screen assert the importance of worship, the obligations incumbent upon the believers and the power of God. It indicates that the nature of the monument also determined the character of epigraphs that was to be engraved on it.

Like the Qutb Minar, Iltutmish also renovated the Quwwatul Islam mosque. Isami writes that Iltutmish erected a Jama Masjid in Delhi.[26] He undoubtedly means the expansion of the

Quwwatul Islam mosque undertaken by the Sultan. The expansion of the mosque was perhaps necessitated by the steady growth of Muslim population in Delhi and also to commemorate his diverse military victories. In 1229-30, Iltutmish added two sections of three arches each to the north and south of Aibak's arched screen. The outer walls of the mosque on the north, east and south were extended tripling the overall area of the original building. As a result of this expansion, the Qutb Minar came to be situated within the precincts of the mosque on its south-east corner. The extended qibla screen of Iltutmish is decorated with floral relief and contains several epigraphs both in Kufic and Naskh characters. The motifs on Iltutmish's screen relate closely to those found on the Ghurid structures in Afghanistan. They are more abstract than those on Aibak's screen and have been carved in deep flat relief. The overall appearance is that of rich tapestry, almost a *horror vacui* design; this tendency toward intense patterning over an entire stone-carved surface is also found in early Mughal monuments.[27]

The arched screen is built of red sandstone. The northernmost arch (it falls in front of Iltutmish tomb which is situated on the north-west corner of the extended mosque) is in a dilapidated state and only retains some portions of chapter 67: 10-15 of the holy Quran explicitly concerned with obedience to Allah and salvation for the righteous. The second arch has two Quranic inscriptions bearing two verses from Surah al- Fath (48: 15-16 which) refer to the half hearted followers of the Prophet Muhammad. Anthony Welch opines that these epigraphs may have been directed at recent converts to Islam in India, or to less than enthusiastic Muslims in Iltutmish's own army or possibly also to the Rajput forces opposing the Turks.[28] The second long inscription on the same arch has been taken from Surah Yasin (36:1-10). These verses refer to the defeat and surrender of the enemy to who have not yet received the Revelation. The epigraph, suggests Anthony Welch, was perhaps meant to communicate that the Sultan is following the



Figure-7: Rear view of the remains of Iltutmish's northern screen extension (courtesy: google)

example of the Prophet Muhammad in India, who was sent to bring the Revelation to those who had not been warned.[29] On the third arched screen of Iltutmish's northern extension immediately north of the arched screen of Aibak, an historical epigraph dated 620 AH (1223-24 AD) can be seen. The characters are embossed in Naskh style. The Quranic verses here relate to Divine Unity, God as Saviour, the role of Prophet Muhammad as Messenger, duties of prayer etc.

The arch of the screen built by Iltutmish and placed immediately south of Aibak's screen contains many verses. Chapters 61: 12-13, referring to the promise of paradise and importance of pilgrimage etc, as well as verses 1-3 and 96-102 respectively from chapter 3 have been engraved here. The arched screen also contains a few Prophetic Traditions like the following: "(the Prophet) peace be upon him, said ….non-Arabs, none can acquire excellence except through righteousness."[30] Another

Tradition depicting the importance of prayers and the particular blessing bestowed upon those believers who attend prayer in congregation has been engraved on this screen.[31] On the second southern arch, Quranic verses from chapters 35(1-2, 7-12); 3(132-36 and 145-150) and 9(112) have been designed. Some of the attributes of God are also mentioned here. A fragmentary inscription on the arched recess is found which mentions the tradition in which the reward for constructing a mosque and dedicating oneself to the service of the mosque has been stated.[32] The third southern most arch contains verses from chapters 71(1-5 and 10-18) and 17(1-6 and 10-12) respectively. Verse 1-6 from chapter 17 has also been inscribed on the central large arch of Qutbuddin Aibak. These verses refer to the famous description of the Mi'raj (ascension to the heaven) of the Prophet and talk about the Revelation to Moses as well as the punishment meted out to the Children of Israel by the Almighty for their lapses



Figure-8: Ruins of Iltutmish's southern arched screen extension (courtesy: google)

in the world.[33] The reference to Bani Israel, opines Anthony Welch, is probably meant for the non- Muslim opponents of Iltutmish.[34] At the end of other verse from chapter 17(10-12) appears an historical epigraph in Arabic prose dated 627 AH (1229-30 AD) which possibly refers to the date of construction of Iltutmish's extension.

Though in a dilapidated state, the Quwwatul Islam Mosque is still extant and its larger campus, which includes the Minaret (Qutb Minar), graves, colleges, and additional structures, has been included by the UNESCO in its list of World Heritage Monuments.

The Tomb of Sultan Iltutmish

Under the patronage of Sultan Iltutmish, the subcontinent's first monumental tombs were built: his own mausoleum and the Sultan Ghari where his son Nasiruddin Mahmud (d.1230) lies buried. The tomb of Iltutmish lies immediately to the north-west of the extended segment of the Qwwatul Islam mosque. There is a debate about the actual patron of this tomb. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan argues that it was constructed during the reign of Raziya simply on the premise that it is the children who construct the tomb at the death of their father.[35] C. J. Campbell is of the opinion that it was built during the lifetime of Iltutmish as the architectural elements found in Iltutmish's extension of the Quwwatul Islam mosque have been repeated here. He also remarks that the reigns of Iltutmish's two immediate successors were too short and troubled to have allowed them to undertake work of such magnitude and cost.[36] General Cunningham also observes that the tomb is of the same age as the Qutb Minar. Anthony Welch writing recently has suggested that the construction of the tomb may have been begun in 1229-30 at the time of the extension of the Quwwatul Islam mosque and its arched screen for the tomb is situated behind the mosque's north-west corner and is aligned with its expanded north wall.[37] It is also noteworthy that there is

a great deal of similarity between the arched screen of the mosque built by Iltutmish and this tomb in terms of style of architecture and the selection of inscription and hence the tomb seems to be a continuation of the qibla screen. The structure of the arch of the aforementioned screen is also similar to the corbelled arch used in the three entrances of the tomb. Moreover, the style of calligraphy used in both the edifices is also same. It can therefore be said with some conviction that the tomb of Iltutmish was built during the lifetime of Iltutmish itself. The quality of the structure with its intricately carved designs and splendid calligraphy also indicates that it was the outcome of a long and peaceful reign and was not the product of turbulent times.

The tomb is a simple square chamber and was covered originally by a circular dome.[38] It gives the impression of a squinch-arch which is a straight or arched structure across an interior

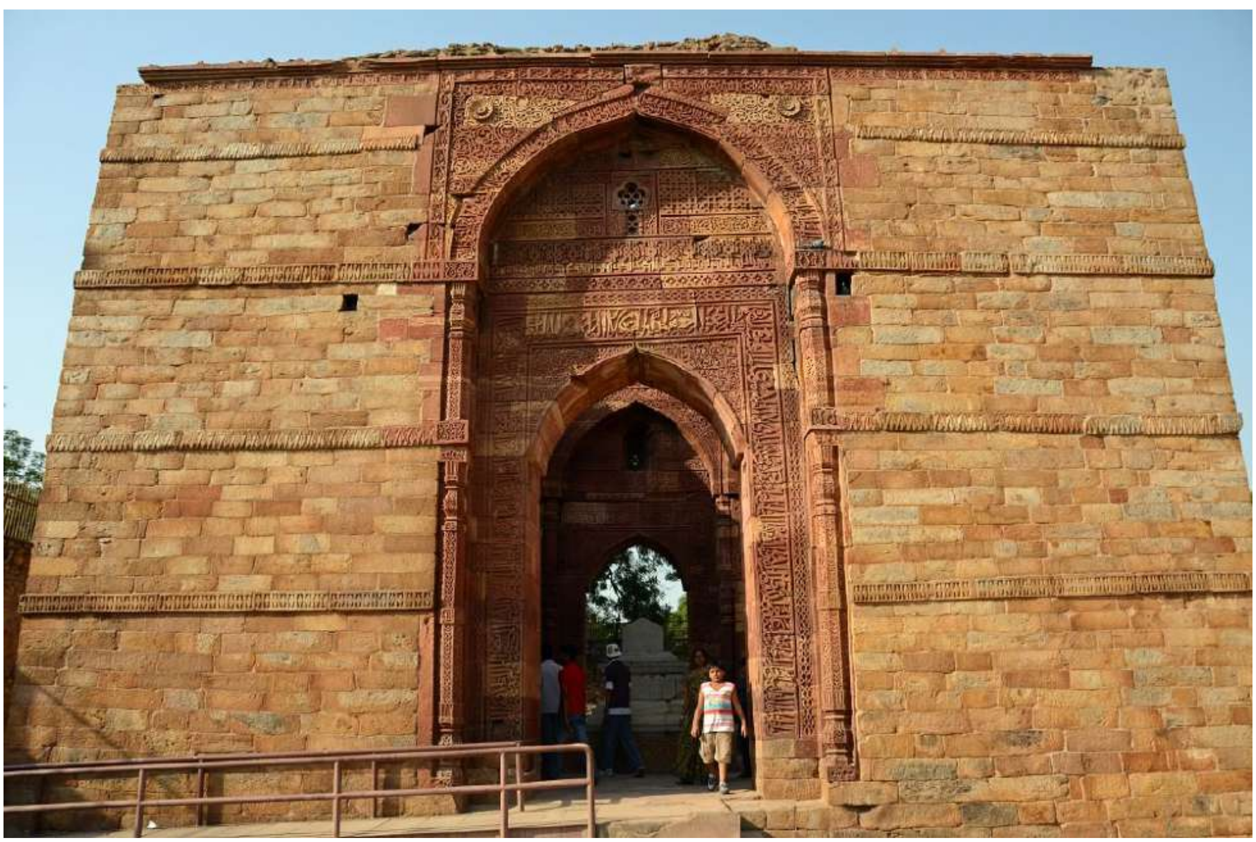


Figure-9: The Tomb of Iltutmish (courtesy: google)



Figure-10: Inside view of Ilutmish's tomb (courtesy: google)



Figure-11: The Squinch-arch (courtesy: google)

angle of a square tower bearing a superstructure such as a dome. The building measures 14 m on each side. It has arched entrances on its eastern, northern and southern walls. In the western wall of the tomb there are three niches officiating for the mihrab of the mosque. The central niche is covered with marble while the other two niches are faced with red sandstone. The structure over the grave, according to Carr Stephen, consists of a marble plinth ($2^{1/3}$ feet high, 14 feet long and 9 feet wide); on this form is fixed a block of marble shaped like a casket ($3^{1/2}$ x 10 x 6) and over it is placed the usual bier-shaped sarcophagus.[39] But it is a cenotaph and the underground vault beneath is out of alignment with the chamber above. Nearly the entire interior surface including with walls and roof is intricately decorated with arabesque designs elaborated with as many as thirty Quranic inscriptions and a few Prophetic Traditions in both naskh and tughra characters. Marble is used only in the central mihrab recess and the cenotaph in the middle of the chamber. The rest of the interior is built with red sandstone. The exterior of the tomb is very simple. The outer wall is plain ashlar dressed with bands in grey quartzite stone sparsely present. It is also curious that none of the inscriptions on the tomb contains any historical record. Entering from the eastern side, a visitor comes across the east wall first of all. The inscriptions are meant to be read in sequence and counter-clockwise. The first eleven verses of Surah Yasin are engraved around the interior beginning from east wall from its north side then running across north, west and south walls ends on the south of the east wall. Verses from Surahs al- Fath, al- Isra,' al- Qadr and al- An'am have also been inscribed on the eastern wall of the mausoleum. These verse promise paradise to the believers, describe the Mi'raj of the Prophet, relate the power of Revelation and talk about the unity and omnipotence of God respectively. Anthony Welch writes that the final verse of chapter six seemed especially appropriate for Sultan Iltutmish whose reputation for piety has been noted by contemporary and later chroniclers. The verse says:

He it is who hath placed you as viceroys of the earth and hath exalted some of you in rank above others, that He may try you by (the test of) that which He hath given you. Lo! Thy Lord is swift in persecution, and lo! He verily is Forgiving, Merciful.[40]

Four major themes dominate the epigraph on the northern wall: obligations of the believers, the fundamental oneness of Allah, warnings to non-believers, and the power of Allah as the sole creator. The west wall, being the qibla facing the Mecca, is most densely engraved. In keeping with its location, the Quranic verses selected for epigraphs on this wall focus on the theme of faith rather than warnings and punishment. On the qibla's three mihrabs appear verses dealing with the Revelation, the power of Allah to take life, prayer and the promise of paradise to the faithful. In fact, eternal paradise as a reward for true believer on the Day of Judgment is a recurring theme in the epigraphs found on the tomb. For instance, the following verses from Surah al- Kahf (18: 107-110) connect future paradise with present day belief and righteousness:

> Lo! Those who believe and do good works, theirs are the Gardens of Paradise for welcome.
>
> Wherein they will abide, with no desire to be removed from thence



Figure-12: The western qibla wall of the tomb (courtesy: google)

.

Say: though the sea became ink for the Words of my Lord, verily the sea would be used up before the words of my Lord are exhausted, even though We brought the like thereof to help.

Say: I am only mortal like you. My Lord inspireth in me that your God is only One God. And whoever hopeth for the meeting with his Lord, let him do righteous work, and make none sharer of the worship due unto his Lord. [41]

In the same vein, the following verse from Surah al- Saff, which forms part of one epigraph on the tomb, gives a more graphic description of Paradise.

He will forgive you your sins and bring you into Gardens underneath which rivers flow, and pleasant dwellings in Gardens of Eden. That is the Supreme triumph. (61:12)[42]

It is no wonder that perhaps the most graphic description of the paradise, which appears in Surah al- Waqiah (56: 10-28), have been inscribed on the base of the tomb's marble cenotaph.[43] Catherine Asher rightly suggests, 'Thus commences in India the tradition of paradisiacal imagery for tomb construction. Under the Mughals and culminating with Taj Mahal, this theme came to be used with extraordinary effect, not only in inscriptions but in the entire conception of the monument'.[44] Verse bearing on paradisiacal imagery were perhaps used to communicate to the visitor to the tomb that that the person who is buried here is in reality living in paradise.

On the southern gateway, the concept that Allah as the sole power and creator has been emphasized by selection from three different Surahs. Rest of the south wall has epigraphs containing verses from the chapters dealing with Allah's power, divine omnipotence, reminder of the day of Judgment; verse from Surah Yasin have also been engraved here. Anthony Welch writes 'whoever selected these epigraphs wished to create a set of statements focused not simply

on the situation of the Muslim sultans in the first half of the thirteenth century in northern India but also on the function of the mausoleum itself, as a monument to the ruler's achievements for Islam and as a prelude to paradise. And the west wall's wider and most distinctive range of meanings indicates the special symbolic significance of the qibla wall to both architect and the text selector.'[45] The octagonal zone of transition which originally supported the now collapsed dome is heavily inscribed with verses from Surah al- Mulk (67: 1-30). These reflect upon themes like God as Creator, the Forgiving, His omnipotence and also warnings to non-believers and deniers of the Revelation. This is a unique instance where a whole long chapter with all thirty verses has been engraved at one place. The only other example of this kind is found on the Minaret of Jam where the entire Surah Mariam (19: 1-98) has been inscribed.[46]

The tomb of Iltutmish is not simply an architectural delight. It also served as the model for the later generations. Its epigraphy with diverse themes particularly the idea of paradisiacal imagery have been utilized, as mentioned above, in various later mausoleums.

The Tomb of Nasiruddin Mahmud or Sultan Ghari

Prince Nasiruddin Mahmud, the eldest son of Iltutmish died in the year 1230 in Bengal. His mortal remains were brought to Delhi and interred in a tomb built by his father. The tomb of Nasiruddin Mahmud is located five kilometers to the west of Quwwatul Islam Mosque. The monument is popularly known as Sultan Ghari because according to a legend Nasiruddin Mahmud who had a mystic bent of mind is reported to have said at the time of his death that an humble man like him was not worthy of being buried in a tomb but that he should be thrown into a pit. His will was honoured by burying him in a vaulted crypt (ghar). Hence the tomb came to be known as Sultan Ghari.[47] Another view is that the term Sultan Ghari or 'Cave King' was

given to the tomb by the populace of Delhi.[48] It was situated in the centre of madrasah complex that has been constructed under the patronage of Sultan Iltutmish.[49] It is a square building which resembles a fortress. The large enclosure measures 33 meters on each side. Built of stone and mortar, it stands on a high plinth about 14 feet above the ground. At each corner of the building there is an imposing turret. The main gateway is on the eastern side and a broad flight of stairs lead from the ground to the marble entrance. The entrance on the east is an arched gateway which stands forward about 3 yards from the wall of the enclosure. The lower half of the piers of the arch is of red sandstone while the upper half is made of marble. The gateway had narrow wings on either side at a length of about 4 feet from it. Each wing is pierced with an overlapping arched window. The plinth, the wings of the gateway, the walls and the towers are covered with plaster. The inner door of the arched gateway is profusely decorated with scrolls and inscriptions



Figure-13: The eastern gate of the Sultan Ghari (courtesy: google)

on marble. An Arabic inscription on the marble gateway is as follows:

> The order of the construction of this auspicious building was given by the great King, the exalted Emperor, master of the necks of the people, the shadow of God over the world; master of peace ---.the King of Kings; the sun of the world and faith, the elect by the mercy of the Almighty: Abul Muzaffar Iltutmish, Sultan the ally of Amir ul Momnin. May God preserve his country. Abul Fateb Mahmud. May God protect him with his forgiveness and give him a place in the Garden of Paradise. In the month of the year 629 (hijri)[50]

The marble entrance has three epigraphs. The first in naskh letter is from Surah al-Taubah (9:18-19). The verses not only talk about the requirements of faith but also speak of pilgrimage to religious sanctuaries. This inscription indicates that Anthony Welch's remark that this earliest known monumental Muslim tomb in India was intended from its inception to serve as a place of pilgrimage may perhaps not be too far-fetched.[51] The same inscription is also found on Qutbuddin's qibla screen, Iltutmish's arched extension of that screen, the mausoleum of Iltutmish and the qibla screen of Ajmer mosque. The second Quranic citation here has been taken from Surah Yasin (36: 1-9). These verses are also found, as shown above, on Iltutmish's arched screen and his own tomb. The theme of these verses, as we know, is the warning to the non-believers. The final Quranic verse engraved on the entrance is the famous ayat al- Kursi (2: 255) which is followed by two verses of Surah al- Baqarah (2: 256-57). The ayat al-Kursi is engraved practically on all Muslim graves, tombs, and mosques since it remind the faithful of the majesty and power of the Almighty God. It is most frequently used on Islamic monuments in India as well. Its appearance on this tomb, on Iltutmish's mausoleum and on the Qutb Minar marks its first known use in India.

On the marble lintel of the entrance doorway, a single verse of chapter 3: 25 can be found. Here one can find another verse from the same chapter albeit incomplete which is as



Figure- 14: The marble gateway of the tomb (courtesy: google)

follows:

Say: O Allah! Owner of Sovereignty! Thou givest sovereignty unto whom Thou wilt, and Thou withdrawest sovereignty from Thou wilt. Thou Exaltest… (3: 26; incomplete)[52]

The verse perhaps gives an oblique reference to the deceased Prince Nasiruddin Mahmud's destiny who was the heir-apparent but died before he could assume the sovereignty after his father.

Crossing the arched doorway the visitor comes across a room which leads to the courtyard. The central courtyard is largely occupied by an octagonal roof over the crypt. The

vaulted crypt which is the burial chamber contains four plastered graves, of which the one against the west wall is ascribed to Nasiruddin Mahmud, better known as Sultan Ghari. The other two graves are of Ruknuddin Firoz and Mu'izuddin Bahram Shah respectively. At the foot is the fourth grave of an anonymous child.

On the interior west wall of the court yard is a mihrab of three arched recesses. It is fronted by a single arcade supported by marble and sandstone pillars. Apart from the entrance,



Figure-15: The interior west mihrab of the tomb (courtesy: google)

the other area which is profusely engraved with Quranic verses is the mihrab. It carries verses from five different chapters along with some of the names of Almighty Allah. A marble 'guldasta' (flower vase) inscribed with the word al- Malik (The King) embossed in Kufic letters decorate the interior of the inner arched recess while on its arch only a portion of Surah al-Jinn (72 : 18) is inscribed in naskh.[53] This is the first use of this verse in India. Incomplete verses from other four other chapters are found around and above the mihrab. Being the qibla side, the verses which address to the non-believers have been omitted as there was probably no need to mention them on the wall facing which the Faithful offer their prayers. The qibla inscriptions were more concerned with the importance and the reward of prayer and the promise of paradise than with the fate which awaits the idolaters. According to Anthony Welch, 'the theme of sovereignty is historically associated with monumental entranceways, while the importance of worship is suitably mentioned around the mihrab. And while the interior mihrab area speaks to the faithful and promises them paradise, the exterior entrance threatens the disbelievers with a terrible fate….thus both architecturally and epigraphically the entrance and qiblah were understood as two distinct areas having different associations serving different functions, and bearing appropriately different messages.'[54] All the inscriptions of Sultan Ghari except one also appear on the other buildings constructed in Delhi and Ajmer under the patronage of Iltutmish. The tomb is also the first building in India which boasts of extensive use of white marble as a building material. This also negates the general impression that extensive use of marble was experimented by Sultan Alauddin Khalji in his buildings first of all.

Kushk- i Firozi

A reference to the royal palace of the chief queen of Iltutmish and the mother of Raziya is found in *Tabaqat i Nasiri*. It was termed as Kushk- i Firozi or Qasr i Firozi. (the Firozi palace)[55]

Minhaj writes that when Balban Kishlu Khan had assumed sovereignty after the assassination of Bahram Shah (1242), Alauddin Mas'ud Shah (r. 1242-44) was brought from Qasr- i Safed (the white palace)[56] to this citadel and was proclaimed king by the nobles of Iltutmish.[57] Within the walls of the same palace, Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud (d. 1260) held his first public reception.[58] The area where it was situated has not been identified. Mr. Beglar, an archeologist, is reported to have excavated from the back of Quwwatul Islam Mosque several baskets full of green enameled tiles with Arabic inscriptions and ornaments. General Cunningham describes the tiles as 'unmistakably blue, although they have a greenish tinge.' On the basis of Cunningham's findings, Stephen Carr suggests that 'it is not unlikely that the ruins belong to Kushk- i Firuzi or the Turquoise Palace.'[59] This theory cannot be without truth since Isami has also written that in the neighbourhood of Jama Masjid, Iltutmish raised a stronghold which he fortified against thieves and demons.[60] At present, there is no sign of this palace.

Hauz- i Shamsi

Iltutmish's building interest was not limited to the religious and 'secular' structures alone. He erected building of public utility as well. The tank constructed by Iltutmish in Delhi in 1229, known as Hauz i Shamsi, belongs to this category. The first question that comes to mind is what motivated the Sultan to construct the tank? Many contemporary writers have referred to shortage of water supply in Delhi in this period. The problem was multiplied many fold when the population of Delhi began to increase by leaps and bounds following its emergence as the capital of a budding empire. We know that a large number of scholars, poets, soldiers of fortune, theologians and Sufis etc. had taken shelter in the town in order to escape the Mongol fury in Central and West Asia at the turn of the thirteenth century. This would certainly have created pressure on the already meager resources of water in Delhi and the need of a new source of water

would have arisen. It is said that when Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki first visited the city, he was obliged, contrary to the Sultan's request, to live in Kilokheri owing to the shortage of water supply in the capital. The river Yamuna was far away from the centre of the town and the rocky ground on the Aravalli out spurs precluded the digging of wells at most places.[61] The Sultan was therefore keen to solve the long lasting problem of shortage of portable water in his new capital and the only remedy available to him was to construct a hauz (tank) near Delhi to fulfill the need of commoners who till now used to satisfy their needs mainly through wells.[62]

A very interesting story is related regarding the construction of the tank and the selection of the site where it was erected. It is said that once the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h), astride on his steed (burraq), appeared in the Sultan's dream and suggested the site suitable for the construction of the tank. The next day, the story goes, the Sultan along with Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki, went out to look for the site specified by the Prophet. It is said that the place indicated by the Prophet was marked by the hoof print of his horse and water was oozing out from the spot. This hallowed spot became the centre of the vast tank which Iltutmish decided to excavate.[63] According to another anecdote, it was not the Prophet but Hazrat Ali (a.s), the cousin and son in law of Prophet who had appeared in the dream of both the saint and the Sultan and the former was called upon to explain the dream. The Sultan was advised by the Khwaja to build a tank where Hazrat Ali had appeared.[64] This resulted in the construction of Hauz- i Shamsi.

The tank was situated at a distance of approximately one mile from the Iron Pillar which is now on the southern outskirts of Mehrauli. The sides of the tank were built with red sandstone though of that material nothing remains now. Surprisingly no inscription has been found on the structure. The tank originally covered an area of more than 100 acres of land (276 bighas).[65] It was supplied by rainwater. Ibn Battuta's testimony that the tank was 2 miles in length and 1 mile

in width point to its huge dimensions as well as roughly rectangular shape.[66] Isami writes that the Sultan built Hauz i Shamsi and that it was so named because its water was crystal like the shining sun.[67] Though it was not possible even for a tank of this dimensions to fully satisfy the need of the entire population of Delhi as the problem of carrying water to the interior would still have remained intact, yet it seemed to have improved the supply of water in the capital appreciably for Khwaja Qutbuddin later moved into the metropolis and took up residence near the mosque of Malik Izzuddin.[68]

By the time of Alauddin Khalji, the tank's utility had diminished considerably. We are told by Amir Khusrau that the hauz- i Sultani which supplied much of the water consumed in Delhi had been silted and choked with mud. The Sultan ordered that it be thoroughly cleaned so that the spring beneath it again sprouted with abundant water. He also built a domed pavilion in the centre of the tank in 1311.[69] The dome or pavilion stood on a masonry terrace about 2 ½ feet high and 52 feet square. It is supported by 12 pillars each about eight feet high and enclosing an open roof about 24 feet square.[70] Under the dome is a stone slab bearing the mark of the hoof but not the o riginal one, which has been removed.[71] The tank was repaired again during the reign of Firuz Tughluq. It was reported to the Sultan that dishonest people had filled up the channels that brought water to it. Firuz ordered these channels to be re-opened and punished the culprits.[72] The tank thus became abundant with water like before.

Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya was also full of praise for the tank and commented on the sweetness and benefits of water from the royal reservoir. He once told his disciples that some people have reported that Iltutmish had come to their dream and told them that he had been subjected to God's mercy on account of the reservoir.[73] The Moroccan traveler Ibn Battuta, as mentioned above, was struck by the vastness of the tank. Even in the fourteenth century, he

found the inhabitants drawing their drinking water from the tanks. He writes that the tank lies near the Idgah (musalla) of Delhi. On its western side facing the Idgah were built platforms of stone, one higher than another. Under each platform are stairs for the person to get down to the water. Beside each platform, he further observes, was a dome of stone containing seats for amusement and those who seek pleasure. The dome was two storied and stood in the middle of the tank. The dome also contained a mosque where fakirs used to gather. When water arose, the dome could be reached only by boats.[74]

On account of its hallowed origin, the tank became a centre of spiritual activities. Many saints and recluses established their dwellings in its vicinity. A mosque (mentioned above) named Auliya Masjid was also constructed inside it. It provided water to the servitors of the dargah of Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki and also for the 'ghusl' (ablutions) of the saint. It is also related that during the cold season, Khwaja Bakhtiyar used to take a dip into the water (of the Hauz) and bring out hot bread much to the delight of his devotees. It was due to mthis miracle that he came to be called 'kaki'.[75] Many a religious discourses and intellectual debates were held on its bank. We know that Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya met Maulana Imaduddin Sunami at the tank and discussed with him about the guidelines for the dervishes.[76] The mud of this tank was considered to be so sacred that Baba Farid used it while preparing the grave of his pir, Khwaja Qutbuddin.[77] The Hauz was among the few places visited by Babur when he came to Delhi after his triumph in the battle of Panipat.[78]

The tank also served as an important means of irrigation. We are told that the people cultivated sugarcane, cucumber, melons and water-melons on the bank of the reservoir and the melons though small, were sweet.[79] Catherine Asher suggests that likely it served agricultural needs and used for the purpose of irrigation.[80] Though the tank was mainly fed by rainwater but a

number of channels seem to have been brought top it from the Jamuna river and other springs, so that the supply of water to the inhabitants of the city could be maintained even during the summer.[81]

The Andheria Bagh and the graveyard of the Kambohs of Panipat are located on the southern side of the tank. On the east the Auliya Masjid[82] and the Lal Mahal, also known as Jahaz Mahal, are situated.[83] The tomb of Sheikh Nuruddin Mubarak Ghaznavi (d.1234) is also situated on this side of the hauz.[84] On the west is the tomb of Sheikh Abdul Haqq Muhaddis Dehlwi (d.1642), the author of *Akhyar- al Akhyar*. In the north lies a neglected garden; a great number of graves surround the tank.

Once a pleasure resort of the royalty, the tank is waterless now. The pavilion at the middle of the tank has now shrunk to the south-western corner of the tank. In March 2003, a half-hearted attempt to renovate Hauz- i Shamsi and develop it as a tourist spot was made.[85] But it is still in a dilapidated state and sewage flows into it from surrounding urban villages of



Figure-16: The present state of Hauz-i Shamsi (courtesy: google)

Mehrauli. Encroachment of land around it is also going on. Although the Archeological Survey of India has been granted nominal guardianship of the tank, there is no system of architectural listing.[86] The urgent need for the protection and renovation of the tank can hardly be over emphasized. It is a part of our national heritage and it is our solemn duty to guard monuments like the tank.

III

The architectural ventures of Iltutmish were not confined to the capital city alone. He made the presence of Turkish power visible through his buildings in other regions as well. Ajmer, for instance, was one such region. Iltutmish added a screen of seven arches to the already existing Jami mosque, popularly known as Arhai Din ka Jhonpra (literally, the two and a half days cottage or mosque) at Ajmer. [87]

Mosque at Ajmer or Arhai Din ka Jhonpra

Qutbuddin Aibak had built the mosque when he was holding the charge of territory of Ajmer. The mosque was located in the central market of the town as was the vogue in the medieval period. It is a square structure entered by a portal to the east and a subsidiary entrance to the south. Both the entrances are centrally placed. Within this enclosure, only the western portion is in a somewhat good state now a day. In the present form, the western qibla side consists of a musalla which measures some 79 x 17 m. The roof is surmounted by five large and five small domes and is supported on 70 pillars or pilasters. Multi flanged towers were placed at three of the four corners of the mosque, the fourth corner leans on a rocky outcrop. An Arabic inscription on the central mihrab along with one of the Prophet's traditions at the back of the hall dates the construction of the mosque in Jamadi Awwal 595/ March-April, 1199. Unlike the

Quwwat ul Islam, the name of the patron is not inscribed here. On the back wall under the roof of the second dome from the centre to the north is an inscription of Zil Hijj 596/ September-October, 1200 recording the name of Abu Bikr ibn Ahmad Khalu (?) al- Harawi as supervisor of the construction.[88] Two verses from Quran (9: 18-19) are found inscribed on the mihrab and its arch recalling the identification and obligations of the believers. The Ajmer mosque was modelled on the Quwwatul Islam of Delhi. Both monuments are therefore similar to each other especially in terms of style and building material used. Spoils of Hindu temples have been used, for example, in the construction of the pillared halls of both mosques, though in Ajmer considerable fresh material has also been used in the hall.[89] Both have arched screen added to the mosque which form the façade of its qibla front. The screen in the Jami mosque of Delhi, as already mentioned, was added by Qutbuddin Aibak and later extended by Iltutmish. In the same vein, Iltutmish added a screen consisting of as many as sever arches in the Ajmer mosque.

The construction of seven arched screen began in 1229-30. The central arch is higher than the adjoining arch and the two small Minars both now badly damaged top the central arch. The Minarets flanking the central arch of the screen have alternating flanges and engaged columns like Saljuq Minarets and tomb towers found in Iran. The treatment of this Minaret, writes Robert Hillanbrand, as an articulating device on each side of the main archway is a feature which characterized the later architecture of Iran and Anatolia but was still in its infancy in Iran at this time.[90] Unlike the mosque the screen was completely Islamic in character. Its Kufic inscriptions and quotation from the Quran evinces its Islamic origin. Many of its arabesque and filigree floral and foliate patterns are Islamic decorative elements. Michael M. Meister writes that ‘their geometric symmetry drawn in fine and balanced lines against the dark background of



Figure-17: The screen at Ajmer (courtesy: google)

shadow remind one of later Persian tile-work.'[91] Yet two of the temple mouldings the kolaba or round moulding and knife edge moulding (kanika) which appear on the screen led Michael Meister to conclude that though the early rulers of the Sultanate fought with their Indian counterparts, yet they continued to employ Hindu workmen who not only rendered new patterns provided by their Islamic patrons (and architectural supervisors) but modified and transformed elements from the Indian tradition.[92] Robert Hillanbrand is of the opinion that the purpose of adding an screen was perhaps to cordon off all taints of Hindu influence from that part of the mosque which was closest to Mecca.[93] This is however not entirely true. The screen was added obviously to beautify the mosque, to add to its magnificence and also to facilitate the extension of the original area of the mosque.

The screen at Ajmer is also heavily inscribed. The inscriptions are found on the right hand (north) Minar (of the central arch), the central arch and its two flanking arches. The remnant on the northern Minar also bears two inscriptions. The lower half records Iltutmish as the patron in the following words ' the Sultan of the Sultans of the East, Abu'l Muzaffar Iltutmish al Sultani, the defender of the amir of the believers, May God make his kingship and his sovereignty eternal and may He raise his situation on the horizons.'[94] It is noteworthy that it is on the basis of this inscription that Simon Digby has concluded that the name of the Sultan spelt Iltutmish, the two 'tas' clearly visible (see chapter one). The upper half of the Minaret bears three verses from chapter 41(31-34) which are concerned with the faith in Allah and the importance of prayer.

On the arch flanking the right (north) side of the central arch, name of an individual Ali Ahmad can be seen. It may be the name of the scribe or the supervisor of the screen. Six verses from chapter 49 (1-6) focusing on the proper decorum and judicious behavior for the faithful have been inscribed. Anthony Welch writes that according Sahih- al Bukhari these verses refer to the controversy between Abu Bakr and Umar over the appointment of the governor from the tribe of Banu Tamim and in this light he that the existence of these verses here may allude to the controversy surrounding the governance of Ajmer, which Qutbuddin had assigned to the son of Prithviraj Chauhan.[95] These verses and the one on the northern Minaret (mentioned above) are new and do not appear on the Delhi mosque. The second epigraph on the same arch contains foue verses from chapter 17(1-4) concerning the Mi'raj of the Prophet and faithlessness of the children of Israel. These verses also adorn, as mentioned above, Qutbuddin's qibla screen, Iltutmish's extension of the same as well as the tomb of Iltutmish.

Unlike the central arch at Delhi, the Ajmer screen's central arch is devoid of any Quranic inscription. Instead a long historical inscription in praise of Sultan Iltutmish can be seen. Its

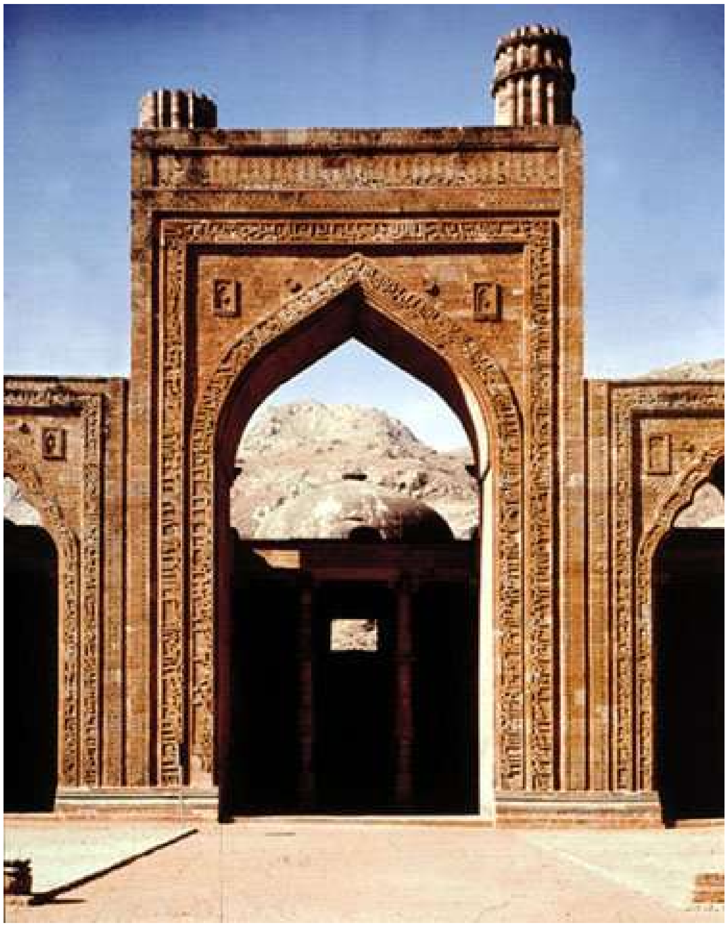


Figure-18: The central arch with its non-functioning Minarets (courtesy: google)

placement on the central arch depicts the majesty and supreme power of the Sultan. The epigraph says that 'this construction has been ordered by the Sultan, the high, the just, the exalted, the most high shahanshah, the master of the necks of nations, the lord of the kings of the Turks and the Persians, the shadow of God on earth, Shams al Dunya wa al din, the refuge of Islam and of Muslims, the crown of kings and of sultans, the subjugator of the infidels and of heretics, the vanquisher of transgressors and of polytheists, the defender of Islam, the elevation of the triumphant empire and the brilliant nation, the possessor of victory, the amir of the continent, the sovereign of the sea….the sultan of the East, the fortified by God, the (one who is) victorious over his enemies, Abul Muzaffar Iltutmish al Sultani, the helper of the caliph of God, the defender of the amir of the believers, may God elevate his position and make his proof to appear at all times. This (has been completed) on the twentieth of Rabi ul Akhir of the year…"[96] The reference of the Sultan as being the 'lord of the kings of the Turks and

the Persians makes a subtle reference to the men of diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds serving the Sultan.

The arch immediately to the south of the central arch contains two inscriptions bearing on verses from chapters 25(60-61) and 59(21-24) respectively. The first exalts God and ask the faithful to behave modestly and the second, also found on Iltutmish's tomb, highlights the various names of God. The mosque at Ajmer was extensively restored in 1825-28 and again in 1900-3.

IV

Badaun being the seat of Iltutmish's power prior to his elevation to the throne of Delhi was another centre of Iltutmish's building ventures. Badaun had in fact a very special place in Iltutmish's scheme of things. It is therefore no wonder that the town boasts an outstanding specimen of the early Sultanate architecture: the Jami Masjid of Badaun.

The Badaun Mosque

The mosque was constructed in the year 1223. The mosque as it stands today comprises an irregular trapezoid measuring approximately 60 x 85 meters; its width being larger than its length. The huge building is made up of baked brick, supported on a course of good ashlar masonry which is 3.6 meters high. It is a monumental building and its chief exterior characteristics are the use of window openings, narrow tapering corner bastions with horizontal bands of decorative brick work and colossal chief entrance (eastern) door. As present, the mosque has a congested / populated residential area as its surrounding.

On the main gateway which is at the centre of the eastern side is an inscription in Arabic

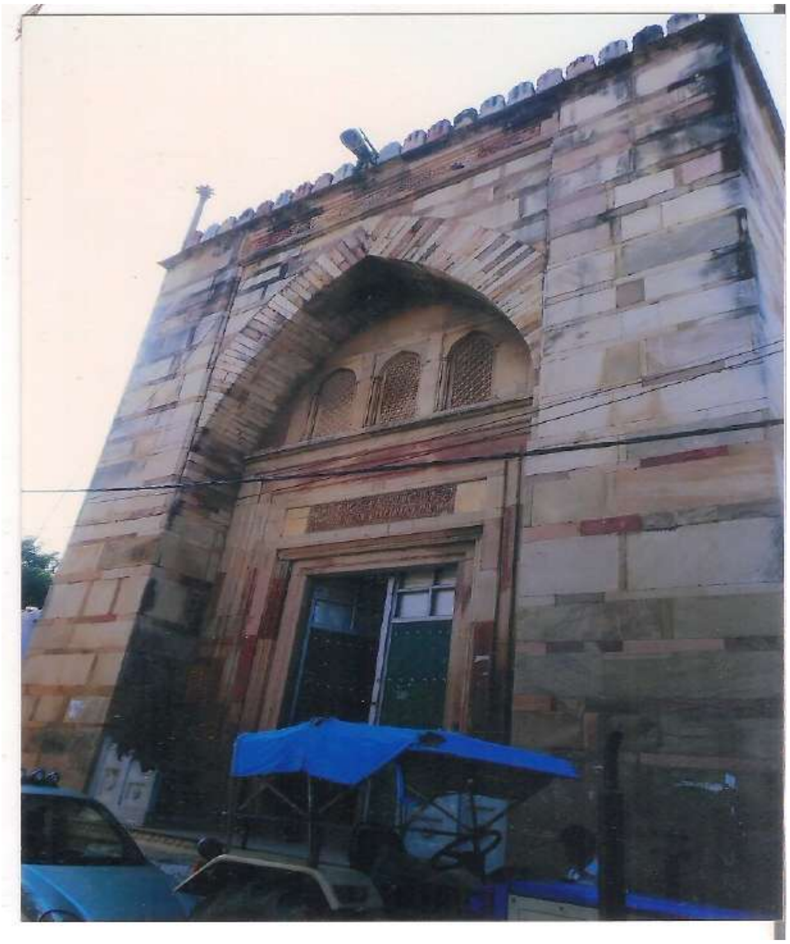


Figure-19: The colossal main entrance of the Badaun mosque (personal photograph)



Figure-20: The 13th century inscription on the main-entrance door of the mosque (personal photograph)

carved in naskh characters on a sandstone plaque. Though the present monumental entrance is a nineteenth century replacement for an earlier gateway, the inscription is original and gives the name of its patron as well the date of its construction. It reads as follows: enter it in peace safely [Quran 15: 46]. The magnificent sultan, the most exalted shahinshah, the Lord of the necks of the people, the sun of the state and religion, the help of Islam and the Muslims, the most jus of the kings and sultans, the victorious Iltutmish, the 'Royal Retainer' (al sultani), the helper of the Commander of the Faithful, may God perpetuate his kingdom. In the months of the year 620 [AD 1223].[97]

The interior of the mosque can be reached by scaling a flight of stairs from the main (eastern) entrance. It leads to the courtyard of the mosque. The overall dimension of the courtyard is approximately 30 x 53 meters. In the centre of the courtyard is a hauz (reservoir) containing water for the ritual ablutions of the faithful. The interior is articulated by means of arcades which framed the central courtyard from four sides. At the centre of each side of the court a shallow aiwan incorporated into a peshtaq (peshtaq is a monumental entrance that projects above the level of the surrounding roofs).[98] The peshtaq of the western side is the largest perhaps due to its position on the qibla side and its being used as entrance to the prayer hall on the western side of the court. The façade of the aiwans and arcades were once beautifully decorated with floral motifs, geometrical designs and epigraphs executed in cut bricks. Most of these have vanished due to ravages of time and accumulated layers of whitewash though on the façade of the western front a portion of it is still visible.

The prayer hall of the mosque is rectangular in shape being divided into four bays which run parallel to the qibla. The hall has a central monumental dome chamber which interrupts the bays. According to Finbarr Barry Flood the dimension of the hall (12.5 x 12.5 meters) is comparable in size to the domed chambers in the Saljuq mosques of Iran, but it is larger than any

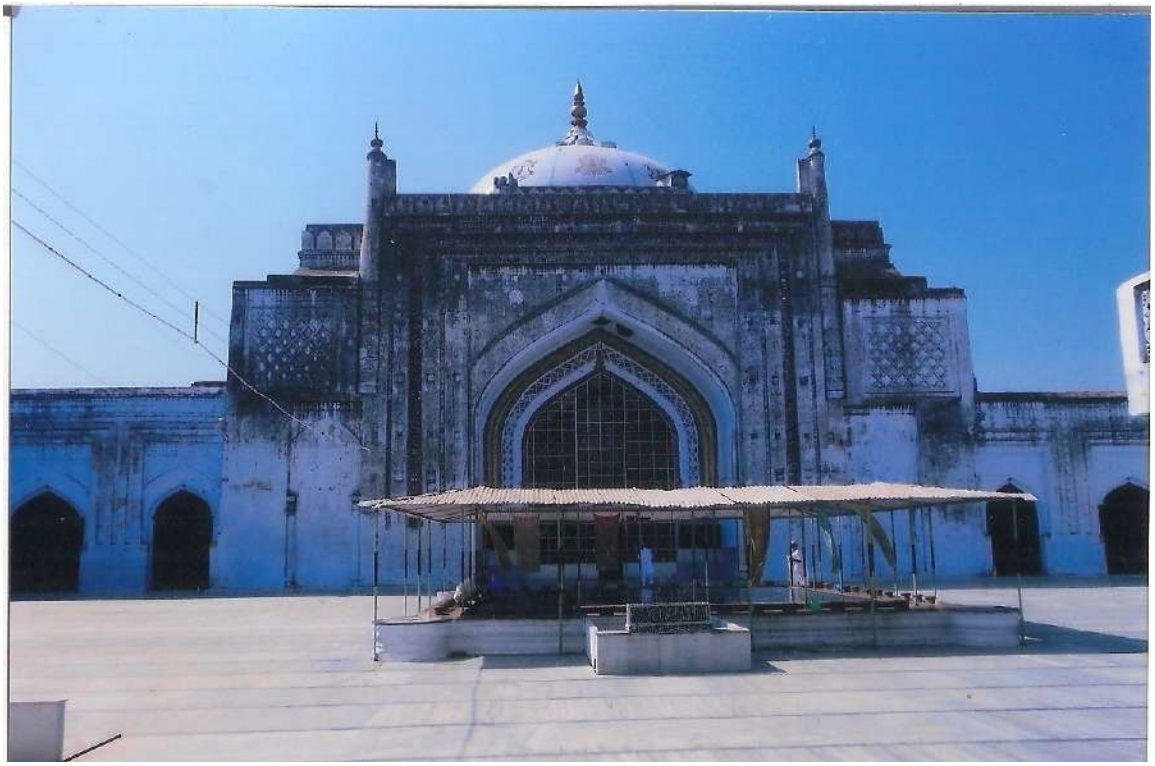


Figure-21: The façade of the prayer hall, showing also the hauz in the centre of the courtyard (personal photograph)



Figure-22: The western qibla wall inside the prayer hall (personal photograph)

dome found in surviving 13th and 14th century Indian mosques with the sole exception of the Tughluqid mosque at Warangal in the Deccan (c. 1322-23).[99] Though the mosque has been extensively renovated several times, yet the prayer hall contains the best preserved features of the thirteenth century architecture. The surviving fragments include two carved stone panels set high up on the qibla wall, on either side of the mihrab opening. The decorative pattern on these panels (cusping and lotus spandrel bosses) is similar to the motifs found on some of the minor arches on Iltutmish's extension screen at Delhi. The epigraphic bands on the qibla panels are inscribed with the Kalima and a verse from chapter 2(238) which is as follows: Be wakeful of your service of prayer, and the midmost service; and honour God by standing before Him in devotion.[100] The lettering of the inscription is similar in style to that found on the eastern gateway of the mosque affirming its thirteenth century origin.

From the present state of the Badaun mosque, it can be easily made out that the building has been extensively renovated during the later period especially during the reign of Muhammad Tughluq (1351 – 1388). An Arabic inscription on a stone slab above the northern entrance of the mosque confirms that an extensive renovation of the mosque was undertaken at this time. The epigraph is as follows: This building was ordered by his exalted majesty, the shadow of the merciful God, father of the mujahid, Muhammad Shah the sultan, may God perpetuate his kingdom and reign, in the year 726 [1326]. Husayn b. Hasan, the kotwal of the province of Badaun built it.[101]

Many of the Iranian elements found in the mosque at present also testify to the repair being carried out in the mosque during later period. Akbar is said to have renovated the mosque in the sixteenth century; three centuries later the British undertook the same exercise as has been reported by General Cunningham. The Badaun mosque stands out from the other 13th century mosques in the sense that even after 800 years, it is still standing in great style and is still in use.

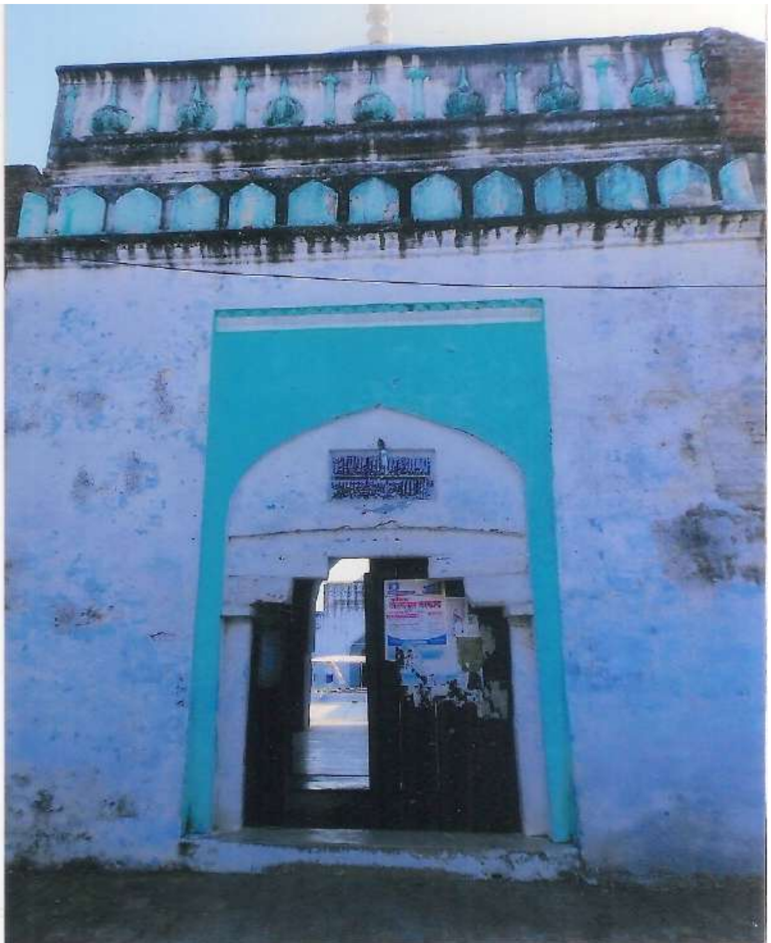


Figure-23: The northern gateway of the mosque ((personal photograph)



Figure-24: Inscription above the door of the northern entrance of the mosque ((personal photograph)

It would be no exaggeration to suggest that it can be counted among the most beautiful mosques in India.

The Shamsi Idgah

To Iltutmish is also given the credit of building an Idgah in Badaun. It is situated at a distance of one mile from the main city. It is said to have been built during the period when Iltutmish was holding the charge of the territory of Badaun. The Idgah is a massive baked brick structure over 90 meters in length. For the purpose of Khutba (sermon) a lofty mimbar (pulpit) was constructed. Immediately on the right hand side of the mimbar is a mihrab opening for the purpose of prayer, above and inside which many Quranic verses have been inscribed. On the left hand side of the pulpit is a passage which (now) leads to the dargah of Shah Wilayat Rahmatullah. A series of shallow arched recesses are found throughout the length of the wall of the Idgah. High above in each wall of recesses, to the north of mimbar, bricks were carved to engrave some religious phrases.

Iltutmish is also said to have constructed a hauz in Badaun which was located somewhere near the Idgah. No trace of the reservoir is found today. The Sultan is also reported to have constructed a polo-ground in Badaun. We are told by Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya that Iltutmish had a polo ground with two entrances built in Badaun.[102] According to the Sheikh, he used to go there often to play polo. This structure was also built by Iltutmish presumably before his elevation to the throne at Delhi.

Many other structures apart from these are reported to have been built by Iltutmish. In his memoirs Babur has referred to a mosque built by Iltutmish adjacent to a temple in Gwalior



Figure-25: The outer view of the Shamsi Idgah (personal photograph)



Figure-26: A closer view of the mihrab (personal photograph)



Figure-27: Idgah on the left-hand side of the pulpit (personal photograph)



Figure-28: One of the shallow arched recesses on the left hand side of the pulpit (personal photograph)

fort.[103] He also mentions that above the gate leading from Urwah valley (in Gwalior) to a walled step well (wa'in), the name of Sultan Iltutmish along with date 630 (1233 AD) is inscribed.[104] It indicates that either that well or the wall for its protection, or both were built by Iltutmish. The Chausath (or Chaurasi) Khambah Mosque in Kaman in Rajasthan was also believed to have been built by Iltutmish.[105] Michael Meister has however suggested that it was built in 1204 and that Iltutmish has nothing to do with it.[106]

From the foregoing, it is amply clear that Iltutmish had a passion for the building art and that he invested a considerable amount of money as well as time in undertaking diverse building projects. It would be no exaggeration to say that Iltutmish's buildings served as a visible symbol of his power and pelf in India in his own life time and that these monuments continue to serve this purpose even in modern times.

V

Iltutmish's regime was not devoid of literary activities as well. Many historical works were compiled during this period. Fakhr- i Mudabbir, Hasan Nizami, Minhaj-us Siraj, Sadiduddin Muhammad Awfi, Majduddin Jajarmi were some of the prominent scholars who flourished in India and compiled their works in the early thirteenth century. Their histories are the very useful source of information for the political and cultural life of the country during the early Sultanate period. It also ushered in a new and fruitful era of historical writing in India. Prior to the coming of Turks, historiography in India was a scarce commodity and historical works were few and far between. The large influx of talented and educated people from Central Asia and Iran added new colour and vitality to India's social and cultural milieu. The patronage and shelter that they received at the Delhi court stimulated their literary skill and output. The

attainments of these writers, poets, scholars became the talk of the Muslim world. Fakhr- i Mudabbir who has the credit of initiating the tradition of history writing in Persian language in India, dedicated his work *Adab ul Muluk wa Kifayat ul Mamluk* (the Civilities of the Kings and the Duties of the Servants) to Shamsuddin Iltutmish.[107] Thirty-four of the forty chapters were released under the title *Adab ul Harb wa ash Shuja'a* (Ways of War and Chivalry). It is regarded by all and sundry as an outstanding treatise on warfare. The work of Hasan Nizami *Taj ul Ma'asir* contains history of India from the second battle of Tarain in 1192 up to the events of the year 1217. Sadiduddin Muhammad Awfi dedicated his work *Jawami'ul Hikayat wa Lavami'ul Rivaayat* to his patron, Nizamul Mulk Junaidi, the Wazir of Iltutmish. The work is encyclopedic in nature; its scope and the diversity of subjects it contained attracted the attention of every educated man even during the life time of the author.[108]

Nizamul Mulk Junaidi also persuaded Majduddin Jajarmi to translate *Ihya-al Ulum-al Din*, the celebrated work of Imam Ghazzali, into Persian. In translating the Arabic text the translator incorporated Quranic verses, ahadith and utterances of the Prophet's companions in original Arabic with translation and explanations of the subtle points therein. The translator also made certain additions and alterations in the text. For instance, .wherever Ghazzali has quoted ruling from the Shafi'i sources regarding legal issues, Jajarmi had them replaced by Hanafi rulings. The work made a great impact on the religious thought of Muslims in India and became a benchmark for future writings on the subject. It was done probably keeping in mind the large non-Muslim population in India. With the establishment of the Sultanate in India, there must have been an urgent need to frame laws keeping in mind the Indian social set up. The Hanafi doctrine being the most liberal was most conducive for the Indian Muslim population at large. Moreover, the Hanafi school of thought was followed by Mu'izuddin Muhammad Ghori which

might have induced his subordinates and slaves to stick to it in their daily routine. Education was also given due importance by Iltutmish. He established a large madrasa in order to cater to the educational needs of the Muslims of Delhi sometime after 1230. The madrasa was situated within the complex of Sultan Ghari where Prince Nasiruddin Mahmud lies buried. It was therefore appropriately named as Madrasa- i Nasiriya.[109]

Many poets flourished at the court of Sultan Iltutmish. Prominent amongst them were Taj Reza, Saiyid Sirajuddin known as Siraji Khurasani, Ameer Ruhani and Nasiri. Though the works of most of these poets are not extant now, stray references to their poetic merit are found in medieval literature. They were known for their wide learning and have even compiled their diwan. Taj Reza is said to have composed verses on the arrival of emissaries from Baghdad.[110] According to Ferishta, Ameer Ruhani, was the native of Bukhara and had come to India in the wake of Mongol onslaught on Central Asia. He sought protection in Delhi where he wrote many excellent poems. Ferishta rates him as the greatest poet and philosopher of his age.[111] Siraji Khurasani was the chief poet of Makran. He subsequently moved to Heart and came to Delhi probably during the early period of Iltutmish's reign. He composed qasidas (panegyrics) in praise of Sultan Iltutmish, Prince Nasiruddin Mahmud and many other nobles of the Sultan like Nizamul Mulk Junaidi and Izzuddin Bakhtiyar. Beside its literary value, Siraji's poems also shed light on the history and culture of India under the early Sultans of Delhi.[112] Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya counted Iltutmish amongst those kings who had keen desire to listen to and appreciate poetry.[113] The tradition of proffering patronage to the learned and the intellectual was not limited to the Sultan. His officers extended support to literary artists as well. Awfi is full of praise for Wazir Junaidi for extending patronage to scholars and intellectuals who have written volumes in various languages (Persian and Arabic).[114]

VI

Needless to say that the cultural attainments of Iltumish's regime were no less significant than his political triumphs. It is true that in the early period when the kingdom was in infancy, the Sultan was more concerned to establish the Sultanate on a firm footing. Most of his time and energy was consumed in tackling political challenges and problems of administration. Nevertheless, with his limited time and resources he succeeded in accomplishing his cultural pursuits. In his buildings, he patronized new techniques and decorative motifs such as geometric patterns (screens in the mosques at Delhi and Ajmer), non- functioning Minarets flanking the central arch (screen at Ajmer and Mosque in Badaun) and paradisiacal imagery in tombs which emerged as a solemn structure worthy of bearing Quranic inscriptions. The most striking characteristic of Iltutmish's monuments is their lavish use of epigraphy. The Quranic inscription engraved on his own mausoleum are unique in terms of their sheer number and diversity of themes and is certainly unparalleled in the history of Islamic architecture. The selection of Quranic verses for the epigraphs was perhaps undertaken with the Sultan's consent and undoubtedly depicts his mindset. But apart from the monarch's mind set the exigency of the situation also seems to have motivated the selection of verses. Muslims were the primary audience of these epigraphs which emphasized the basic tenets of the faith and reminded the faithful of their duty towards God and the recompense and punishment that awaits the obedient and the defiers of law respectively. These inscriptions also served the purpose of projecting the image of Iltutmish as a law-abiding and pious monarch. Epigraphs or calligraphy also served the purpose of decorating and beautifying the Muslim monuments. The inscriptions engraved in diverse styles and characters went a long way in embellishing and giving a face lift to Iltutmish's buildings. It is also pertinent to note that the Sultan undertook most of his construction activities

after 1229 when he had consolidated his position and conquered the entire north India from Multan to Bengal. These buildings were meant to be visible symbols of the power and prosperity of the newly founded Turkish state in India and accomplished this objective fairly well.

NOTES:

[1] Catherine B. Asher, *Architecture of Mughal India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 01-02

[2] A. B. M. Habibullah, *The Foundation of Muslim Rule in India* (Allahabad: Central Publishing House, 1945), p. 290

[3] In the pillar system the weight presses downwards, and if it gets very heavy the stone slab on top can break. But the weight on the arch presses the stones more firmly together instead of breaking them apart. So the arch is much stronger than the pillar and will bear much heavier weights. In this respect the pointed arch is even better than the round arch. The Romans liked the round arch, but the Arabs preferred the pointed arch. See T. G. P. Spear, *Delhi: Its Monuments and History* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995; first published, 1943), p. 102

[4] The measurement of all the stories are taken from J. A. Page, *An Historical Memoir on the Qutb: Delhi* (New Delhi: Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India published by the Director General, Archaeological Survey of India, Government of India, 1998), no. 22, plate XII

[5] Carr Stephen, *The Archeology and Monumental Remains of Delhi* (New Delhi: Aryan Books International, 2002; first published, 1876), p. 36

[6] Firuz Shah Tughluq, *Futuhat i Firuz Shahi*, translated into English by Azra Alvi (Delhi: Idarah i Adabiyat i Dehli, 1996), pp. 28-29

[7] J. A. Page, op. cit., p. 42; The Qutb Minar seems to have been inspired by the Minaret of Jam (in Firozkoh) constructed by Ghiyasuddin Muhammad Ghori. It is slighting shorter in height and cylindrical in shape albeit without the fluting surface. The epigraphs engraved on the Minaret of Jam consist of largely Surah Mariam.

[8] Maulvi Muhammad Ashraf Husain, *A Record of All the Quranic and Non-Historical Epigraphs on the Protected Monuments in the Delhi Province* ((New Delhi: Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India published by the Director General, Archaeological Survey of India, Government of India, 1999), no. 47, p. 104. A description of Qutb

Minar is found in *Tarikh i Firuzshahi* by Shams Siraj Afif. He writes that each renowned ruler had left his memorial for the world and in this manner had proved his wisdom and dexterity. Hence, Sultan Iltutmish built a tall pillar near the Jama Masjid at Delhi. Shams-i-Siraj Afif, *Tarikh-i Firuzshahi*, translated into English by R.C. Jauhri as *Medieval India in Transition* (New Delhi: Sundeep Prakashan, 2001), p. 179. Finbarr Barry Flood however suggests that since this description occurs within a discussion of Firuz Shah's relocation of per-Islam pillar, Afif was perhaps discussing the Iron Pillar that stands in the courtyard of the Mosque. See Finbarr Barry Flood, 'Persianate Trends in Sultanate Architecture: the Great Mosque of Badaun,' in Bernard O' Kane (ed.) *The Iconography of Islamic Art: Studies in Honour of Robert Hillenbrand* (Edinburg: Edinburg University Press, 2005), pp. 185-86, fn 14

[9] Isami, *Futuh al Salatin*, translated into English by Agha Mahdi Husain (London: Asia Publishing House, 1977), vol. II, p. 227

[10] Anthony Welch, Hussein Keshani and Alexandra Bain, 'Epigraphs, Scripture and Architecture in the Early Delhi Sultanate,' *Muqarnas,* vol. 19 (2002), p. 20

[11] J. A. Page, op. cit. p. 19 & p. 30

[12] 'Epigraphs, Scripture and Architecture….' p. 20

[13] Muhammad Ashraf Husain, op. cit., p. 105

[14] Carr Stephen, op. cit., p. 34; J. A. Page, p. 32

[15] Muhammad Ashraf Husain, op. cit., p. 105

[16] Carr Stephen, op. cit., p. 37

[17] 'Epigraphs, Scripture and Architecture…' p. 23

[18] J. A. Page, op. cit., p. 07, fn 01

[19] J. A. Page, p. 32

[20] Muhammad Ashraf Husain, op. cit., p. 106; Carr Stephen, op. cit., p. 35

[21] J. A. Page, p. 22

[22] Carr Stephen, p. 34

[23] U. S. Jolly, *Challenges for a Mega City* (New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company Pvt. Limited, 2010) pp. 138-39

[24] Hasan Nizami writes that one of the brilliant achievements of the king (Qutbuddin) is the cathedral mosque of Delhi, the construction of which was started by him with great and perfect devotion….its pulpit and arches had been embellished with exquisite calligraphy and subtle craftsmanship and covered with strange figures and marvelous engravings executed with remarkable skill….It acquired the additional elegance having been adorned with the engravings of the holy text on the walls in tughra style of calligraphy, which further enhanced its splendor. See Hasan Nizami, *Taj ul Ma'asir*, translated into English by Bhagwat Saroop (Delhi: Saud Ahmad Dehlavi, 1998), pp. 141-42

[25]The mosque was generally built on a raised platform to provide majesty to the entire structure. It also enhanced its solemnity and an appropriate separation of the sacred from the profane.

[26] *Futuh al Salatin*, p. 227

[27] Catherine B. Asher, op. cit., p. 04

[28] 'Epigraphs, Scripture and Architecture….' p. 27

[29] Ibid, p. 28

[30] Muhammad Ashraf Husain, p. 109

[31] For the complete inscription, see ibid, p. 110

[32] For the inscription, see ibid, p. 108

[33] 'Epigraphs, Scripture and Architecture….' p. 25

[34] Ibid, p. 29

[35] Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, *Asar us Sanandid,* (Delhi: Urdu Academy, 2011), p. 176

[36] Carr Stephen, p. 42

[37] 'Epigraphs, Scripture and Architecture….' p. 27

[38] The mausoleum of Iltutmish has been described by Minhaj in context of Izzuddin Balban Kishlu Khan, the slave officer of Iltutmish. It is written that when Balban Kishlu Khan tried to assume sovereignty after the assassination of Sultan Bahram Shah, the nobles assembled at the mausoleum of Iltutmish, repudiated that proclamation and raised Alauddin Mas'ud to the throne. See Minhaj-i-Siraj Juzjani, *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, translated into English by Major H. G. Raverty (Calcutta: The Asiatic Society, 1995; first published, 1881), vol. II, p. 780

[39] Carr Stephen, p. 42

[40] 'Epigraphs, Scripture and Architecture….' p. 30

[41] Anthony Welch, 'Quran and Tomb: The Religious Epigraphs of Two Early Sultanate Tombs in Delhi,' in Frederick M. Asher and G. S. Gai (eds.) *Epigraphy: Its Bearing on the History of Art* (New Delhi: Oxford and IBH Co., 1985), p. 263

[42] Ibid.

[43] For the inscription, see 'Quran and Tomb…' pp. 265-66

[44] Catherine B. Asher, op. cit., p. 05

[45] 'Quran and Tomb…' p. 265

[46] For more on the Minaret of Jam and its epigraphs, see Finbarr Barry Flood, 'Ghurid monuments and Muslim identities: Epigraphy and exegesis in twelfth-century Afghanistan,' *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, vol. 42, no. 3, July-September 2005, pp. 263- 94

[47] Muhammad Ashraf Husain, p. 89

[48] Gordon Risley Hearn, *The Efflorescent History of Delhi* (Delhi: Mount Books, 2010 revised), p. 61

[49] 'Quran and Tomb…' p. 258; Also 'Epigraphs, Scripture and Architecture…' p. 35

[50] Carr Stephen, pp. 40-41

[51] 'Quran and Tomb……' p. 258; Also 'Epigraphs, Scripture and Architecture…' p. 35

[52] 'Quran and Tomb……' p. 259; Also 'Epigraphs, Scripture and Architecture….' p. 36

[53] Muhammad Ashraf Husain, p. 90

[54] 'Quran and Tomb… p. 261

[55] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 638

[56] Qasr i Safed was built by Qutbuddin Aibak in 1205 within the fort of Qila Rai Pithora. See Carr Stephen, p. 22

[57] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 661

[58] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 676

[59] See Carr Stephen, p. 22

[60] *Futuh al Salatin*, p. 227

[61] M. Athar Ali, 'Capital of the Sultans: Delhi during the 13th and 14th century,' in R. E. Frykenberg (ed.) *Delhi through the Ages: Essays in Urban History, Culture and Society* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 35

[62] Hamid bin Fazlullah Jamali Kamboh, *Siyar ul Arifin*, translated into Urdu by Muhammad Ayub Qadri (Lahore: Urdu Science Board, 1989; first published, 1976), p. 33

[63] For the story, see *Siyar ul Arifin,* p. 33

[64] Carr Stephen, p. 39; Bashiruddin Ahmad, *Waqiat i Darul Hukumat i Dehli* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, n.d.), part 3, p. 308

[65] *Asar us Sanandid*, p. 175

[66] Ibn-i- Battuta, *The Rehla of Ibn-i-Battuta*, translated into English by Agha Mahdi Husain (Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1976; first edition, 1953), p. 28; translated into English by H. A. R. Gibb [New Delhi: Saeed International (Regd.), 1990], p. 196

[67] *Futuh al Salatin*, p. 227

[68] N. R. Farooqi, *Medieval India: Essays on Sufism, Diplomacy and History* (Allahabad: Laburnum Press, 2006), p. 72

[69] Amir Khusrau, *Khazainul Futuh*, edited by Muhammad Wahid Mirza (Calcutta: The Asiatic Society, 1953), p. 15

[70] Carr Stephen, p. 39

[71] Delhi Gazetteer, p. 1043

[72] *Futuhat i Firuz Shahi*, op. cit., p. 29

[73] Amir Hasan Sijzi, *Fawa'idul Fu'ad*, translated into English by Bruce B. Lawrence (New York: Paulist Press, 1992), p. 218

[74] *The Rehla of Ibn-i-Battuta*, translated into English by Agha Mahdi Husain, p. 28

[75] Zuhurul Hasan Sharib, *The Sufi-saints of the Indian Sub-continent* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 2006), p. 20

[76] *Fawa'idul Fu'ad*, pp. 211-12

[77] K. A. Nizami, 'Iltutmish the mystic,' *Islamic Culture*, vol. XX, nos. 1-4, 1946, p. 178

[78] Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur, *Baburnama*, translated into English by A. S. Beveridge (New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, 1989), vol. II, p. 476

[79] *The Rehla of Ibn-i-Battuta*, translated into English by Agha Mahdi Husain, p. 28

[80] Catherine B. Asher, 'Delhi Walled: Changing Boundaries' in James D. Tracy (ed.), *City Walls: The Urban Enceinte in Global Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 256

[81] I. H. Siddiqui, *Authority and Kingship under the Sultans of Delhi* (13th- 14th century) (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 2006), pp. 260-61

[82] To know more about Auliya Masjid, see Carr Stephen, p. 171 fn 71

[83] Jahaz Mahal is constructed of grey stone and red sandstone and decorated with glazed blue coloured tiles, believed to have been constructed by some merchants for the comfort of the fakirs.

[84] Abdul Haqq Muhaddis Dehlvi, *Akhbar al Akhyar*, translated into Urdu by Muhammad Muneer Raza Qadri (Lahore: Shabbeer Brothers, n.d.), p. 82

[85] William Dalrymple, 'The Wrecking Ball Culture,' *Time* (Monday) July 11, 2005

[86] Ibid

[87]The title Arhai Din ka Jhonpra has nothing to do with the duration of the construction of the mosque. It refers to the fair of that duration formerly held on the spot and has nothing to do, as the local tradition would have it, with the miraculous completion of the masjid within such a short period. See Robert Hillenbrand, 'Political Symbolism in Early Indo-Islamic Mosque Architecture: The Case of Ajmir,' *Iran*, vol. 26, 1988, p. 105. For many other stories about the construction of the mosque and its peculiar name, see Simon Digby, 'Iltutmish or Iletmish? A Reconsideration of the Name of the Dehli Sultan', *Iran*, vol. 8, 1970, p. 62 fn 27

[88] Michael W. Meister, 'The "Two-and-a-Half-Day" Mosque' in Finbarr Barry Flood (ed.), *Piety and Politics in the Early Indian Mosque* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 226

[89] Ibid, p. 225

[90] Robert Hillenbrand, op. cit., pp. 113-14

[91] 'The "Two-and-a-Half-Day" Mosque', p. 227

[92] Ibid, p. 228

[93] Robert Hillenbrand, op. cit., p. 112

[94] 'Epigraphs, Scripture and Architecture….', p. 43 fn 65

[95] Ibid, p. 38

[96] Ibid, pp. 38-39

[97] Ibid, p. 163

[98] 'Persianate Trends in Sultanate Architecture…, p. 161

[99] Ibid, pp. 162-63

[100] 'Persianate Trends in Sultanate Architecture…, p. 169

[101] Ibid, p. 172

[102] *Fawa'idul Fu'ad*, p. 318

[103] *Baburnama*, p. 610

[104] Ibid, p. 611

[105] Alexander Cunningham, *A Tour to the Province of Eastern Rajputana in 1882-83* (Calcutta: Office of the Superintendent of Government Printing, India, 1885), vol. 20, pp. 55-56

[106] To know more about the Chaurasi Khambah mosque, see Michael W. Meister, 'Indian Islam's Lotus Throne: Kaman and Khatu Kalan' in Finbarr Barry Flood (ed.), *Piety and Politics in the Early Indian Mosque* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 253-62

[107] The other work of Fakhr- i Mudabbir is *Shajra i Ansab* (Book of Genealogies). It contains 136 genealogical tables. It was brought to completion in 1206.

[108] I.H. Siddiqui, *Indo Persian Historiography up to the Thirteenth Century*, (Delhi: Primus Books, 2010), p. 57. The other works of Awfi are *Lubab ul Albab* (an anthology of the early Persian poets) and a Persian translation of Qazi al- Tunukhi's Arabic classic *Kitabul Faraj ba'd ul- Shidda*.

[109] During the reign of Raziya, Minhaj- i Siraj Juzjani was appointed Principal of the Nasiriyya College in Shaban 635 AH/ March-April, 1238. See *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 644. He again got the charge of the College on 17 Safar, 643 AH/ 14 July, 1245 during the reign of Alauddin Mas'ud Shah through the good offices of Ulugh Khan, see *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 667. Firuz Shah Tughluq renovated the parts of the madrasah of Sultan Shamsuddin Iltutmish which had become derelict. See *Futuhat i Firuz Shahi,* p. 29

[110] The verses composed by Taj Reza can be found in *Kulliyat i Anwari*. For more about him, see Agha Abdus Sattar Khan, 'Taj Rezah', *Islamic Culture*, vol. XV, July 1940, pp. 359-66

[111] Muhammad Qasim Hindu Shah Ferishta, *Tarikh-i Ferishta*, translated into English by John Briggs as *History of the Rise of Muhammadan Power in India* (Delhi: Low Price Publications, 2006; first published, 1829) vol. I, p. 118

[112] Professor Nazir Ahmad formerly of the Department of Persian, Aligarh Muslim University has discovered and published the diwans of Siraji Khurasani and Amid Sunami. To know more about Siraji Khurasani and his work, see

Iqtidar Husain Siddiqui, 'Historical Information in the Thirteenth Century Collection of Persian Poems', *Studies in Islam*, 19 (1982), pp. 47-76

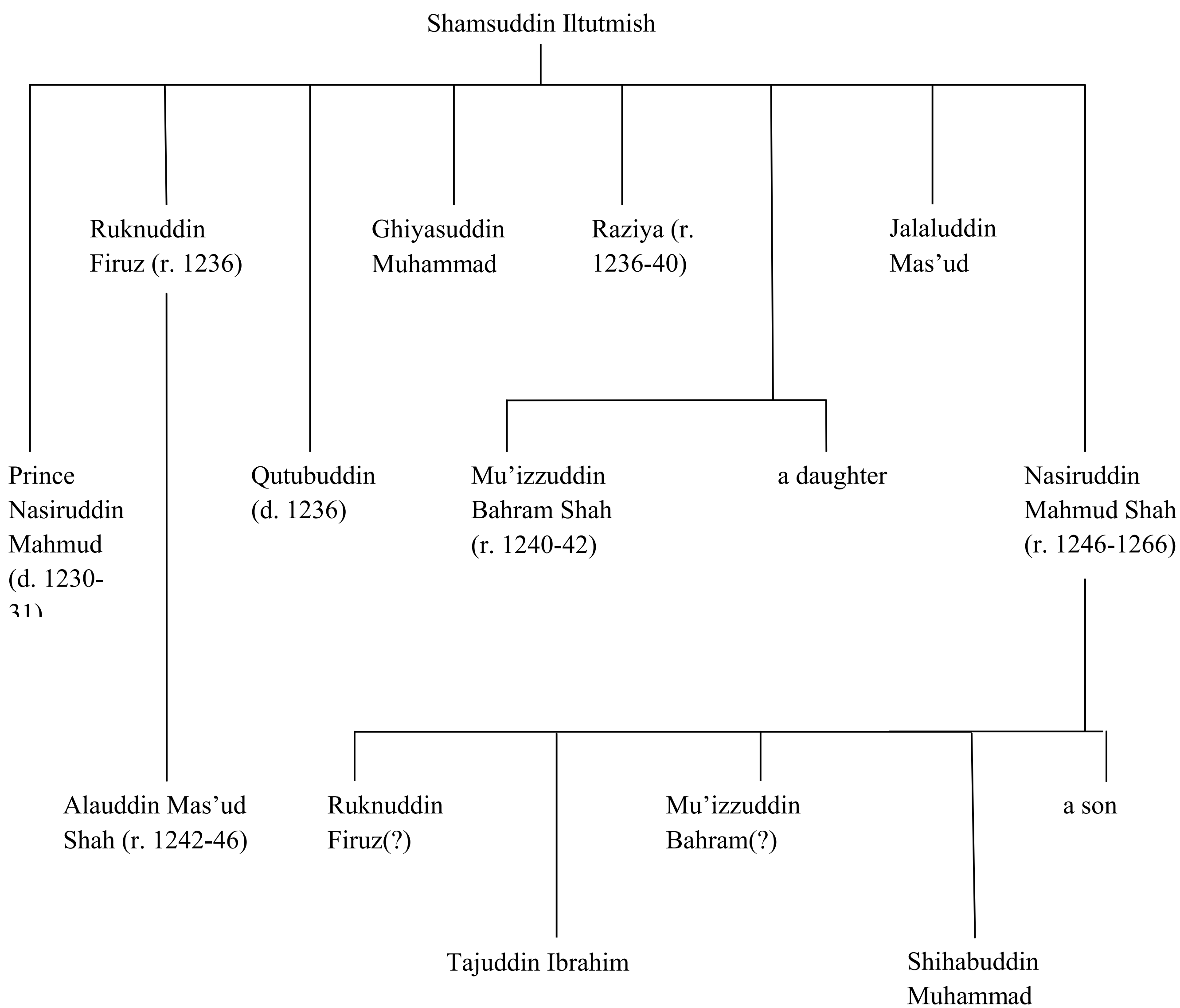
[113] Poet Nasiri arrived when Shamsuddin Iltutmish was holding court and offered a poem in the praise of the Sultan. Nasiri narrated the first few verses. The Sultan while listening the poem was busy with other matters. Nasiri continued to recite some more verses. At last, when Sultan turned his mind to poetry, he could still recall the opening verses of the poem and asked Nasiri to recite further. Such was the sharpness of the Sultan's memory and his interest in poetry. See *Fawa'idul Fu'ad*, p. 319. Nasiri is reported to have arrived from Transoxiana. It is said that he also went to Sheikh Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki to seek his blessings and to request the saint to pray for him so that he could receive a reward in the court of the Sultan. See *Siyar ul Arifin*, p. 38

[114] *Indo Persian Historiography up to the Thirteenth Century*, p. 81

APPENDIX A

Genealogical Table of Iltutmish:

On the basis of information provided by Minhaj's *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* the following chart has been prepared:



Information about nine children of Iltutmish is available in *Tabaqat-i Nasiri*. The eldest child was Prince Nasiruddin Mahmud who, we know, died before Iltutmish closed his eyes. After the death of Iltutmish, it was Ruknuddin Firuz who was placed to the throne in 1236 by the nobles. About Ruknuddin, Minhaj writes that people had their eyes upon him since the death of Prince Nasiruddin Mahmud.[1] He ruled approximately for around seven months only.[2] Ruknuddin's mother was Khudawandah-i Jahan Shah Turkan who before her marriage with the Sultan was a maid in the harem. We are told by Minhaj that she was determined to eliminate the other children of Iltutmish in order to keep the throne safe for his son. Ultimately, this attitude became the cause of their undoing (mother and son). Ruknuddin's son Alauddin Mas'ud Shah was later elevated to the throne by the Turkish nobility and ruled between 1242-46. During the reign of Ruknuddin, we find references of two rather lesser-known sons of the Iltutmish named Qutbuddin and Ghiyasuddin Muhammad. We do not have any information about the mother of either Qutbuddin or Ghiyasuddin Muhammad. Qutbuddin was said to be a youth of great worth and promise.[3] But he was killed on the orders of Ruknuddin and his mother; Ghiyasuddin Muhammad is reported to be younger in years than Ruknuddin. He was last seen in Awadh where he revolted, like many other maliks, due to the tyranny of Ruknuddin and his mother. According to Minhaj, he broke into open rebellion in Awadh, captured the treasures that was going to the capital from Lakhnauti and plundered many towns of Hindustan.[4] However, no other information regarding the fate of Ghiayasuddin is extant in medieval historical literature.

Raziya, apart from Prince Nasiruddin Mahmud, was the most capable among the children of Iltutmish who ruled after Ruknuddin for a period of roughly four years between 1236-40. She was also the daughter of Shah Turkan. Mu'izuddin Bahram Shah was another son of Iltutmish but no trace of Bahram's mother has been found. A sister of his has albeit been mentioned by

contemporary historians. She was a divorcee who was later married to Ikhtiyaruddin Aetkin, the Naib (Deputy Sultan) of Mu'izuddin Bahram Shah,[5] Mu'izuddin Bahram Shah was succeeded, as mentioned above, by Alauddin Mas'ud Shah, the son of Ruknuddin Firuz and grandson of Sultan Iltutmish.

In 1246, the throne of Delhi passed in to the hands of perhaps the youngest son of Iltutmish, Nasiruddin Mahmud. He was so named after the deceased Prince Nasiruddin Mahmud.[6] Malikah- i Jahan was the mother of Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud. This of course, was the title of the queen and her real name is not known. During the tenth year of Nasiruddin's reign in 653 AH/ 1255 AD, she married to a prominent noble Qutlugh Khan.[7] In the same vein, Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud was married to the daughter of Ulugh Khan Balban on 20 Rabi ul Akhir, 647 AH/ 2nd August, 1249 AD. A son was born to them ten years later on 29th Ramadan, 657 AH/ 19th September, 1259 AD. We have no information about his name and subsequent life but names of four other sons of Nasiruddin Mahmud are found (see chart above).[8] Ruknuddin Firuz was certainly not the one born to Balban's daughter for there are references about him as early as 651 AH/ 1253 AD when Hansi along with post of Amir- i Hajib was assigned to Balban.[9] It is therefore evident that apart from Balban's daughter, Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud had other wives or probably concubines who gave birth to his other sons. However, it is not apparent who among the other three, mentioned by Minhaj, was the grandson of Balban.

During the period of Nasiruddin Mahmud, we also came across the name of Jalaluddin Masud, his brother and another son of Iltutmish. He held the charge of Kannauj in 645 AH/ 1248 AD when he was entrusted Sambhal and Badaun.[10] He later revolted against Nasiruddin.[11] In short, we have information about nine children of Sultan Iltutmish; some of them wielded the royal power, others did not. But in the entire period of thirty years after Iltutmish's demise, it

was only his progeny who were considered the rightful claimant to the throne. The same nobility who had openly accepted one of their comrades as their sovereign in place of Aram Shah in 1210 did not dare to elevate to the throne anyone else apart from the progeny of Iltutmish. We know that Balban Kishlu Khan, a prominent noble who commanded great respect among the amirs and maliks declared himself the sovereign after the assassination of Mu'izuddin Bahram Shah but the nobles rejected him and unanimously placed Alauddin Masu'd, the grandson of Iltutmish to the throne.[12] Needless to say that Aibak had never been able to command so much respect and authority among the nobles and people at large as was attained by Iltutmish. This was probably one of the most significant achievements of the Sultan.

NOTES:

[1] See *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 631

[2] See *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 636

[3] See *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 632

[4] Ibid, p. 633

[5] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 650

[6] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 670

[7] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 701

[8] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 672

[9] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 695

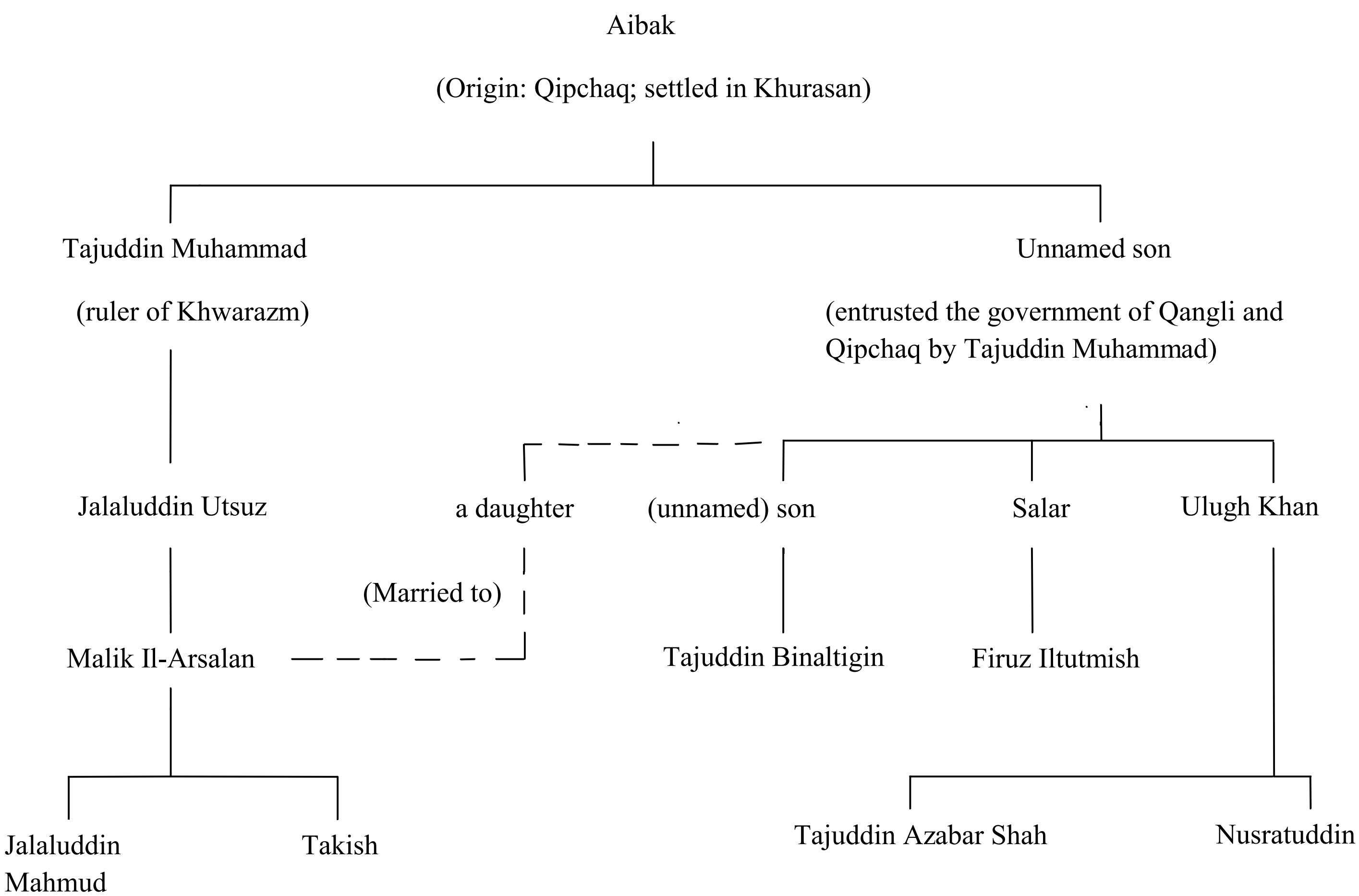
[10] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,*vol. I, pp. 683-84

[11] Ibid, pp. 699-700

[12] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 661

APPENDIX B

On the basis of the information provided by Minhaj-i-Siraj Juzjani,[1] the following family-tree for Firuz Iltutmish, the Shamsi noble can be drawn:



From the chart, it is clear that Firuz Iltutmish and Tajuddin Binaltigin were cousins. It is also evident that the fathers of both Firuz and Binaltigin were paternal uncles of Il-Arsalan, the Khwarazm Shah. However, Minhaj at one place writes that Binaltigin was the son of one of the maternal uncles of Khwarazm Shah.[2] However, Minhaj does not mention the name of the

concerned Khwarazm ruler. The confusion was solved by Nasawi. He writes that the sister of the father of Firuz (Salar) was married to Il-Arsalan.[3] In this sense, Salar and the father of Binaltigin were obviously the maternal uncles of Khwarazm Shah (as mentioned by Minhaj) and that Khwarazm Shah was Takish. Therefore Malik Firuz was uncle as well as cousin of Takish Khwarazm Shah.

NOTES:

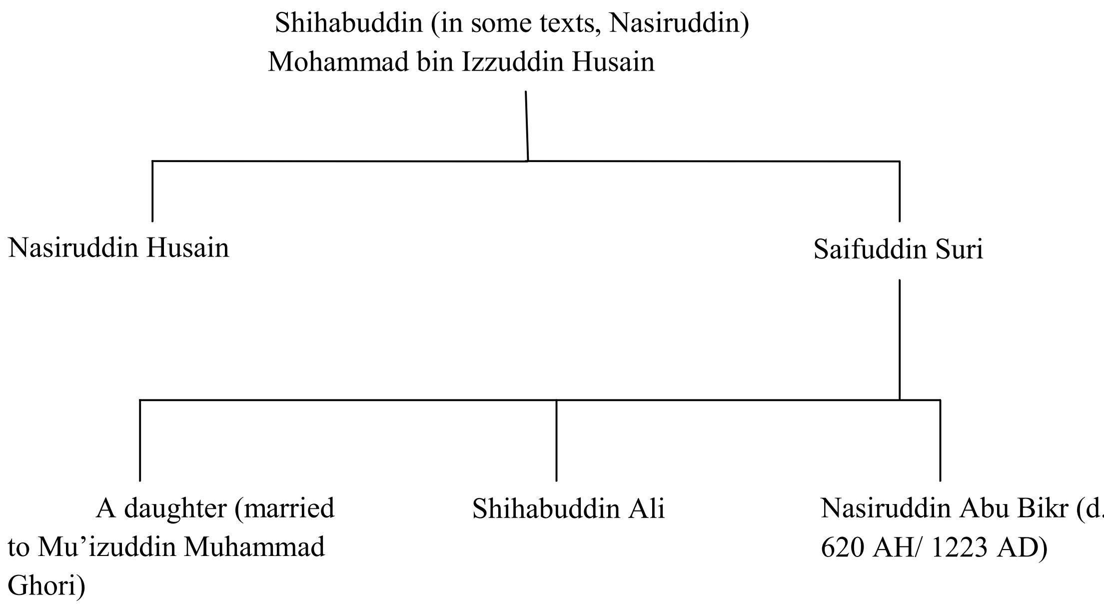
[1]See *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, pp. 233-45

[2] See *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* vol. I, p. 199

[3] See Nasawi as enumerated by Peter Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate,* p. 42, fn. 09

APPENDIX C

On the basis of the information provided by Minhaj-i-Siraj Juzjani,[1] the following tree about the origin of Nasiruddin (Abu Bikr) Madini, the Shamsi noble can be drawn:



Malik Nasiruddin Madini Shansabani as the name suggests belonged to the family of Shansab, the oldest ruling dynasty of Ghor. His grandfather Shihabuddin Muhammad was one of the seven sons of Izzuddin Husain, the ruler of Ghur and the mountainous tract of Jibal. He was in fact the brother of Alauddin Husain Jahansoz and Bahauddin Sam, father of Ghiasuddin and Mu'izuddin Muhammad Ghori. The father of Nasiruddin Madini, Saifuddin Suri was therefore, the first cousin of Mu'izuddin Muhammad Ghori. Nasiruddin Madini was therefore the nephew of Mu'izuddin Muhammad Ghori. The full name of Nasiruddin Madini was Nasiruddin Abu

Bikr. His grandfather Shihabuddin Muhammad had received the territory of Madin (situated in the suburb of Ghor) as his share from his father's patrimony. After the death of Shihabuddin, his son Saifuddin Suri succeeded him at Madin. Saifuddin had two sons: Shihabuddin Ali and Nasiruddin Abu Bikr, and a daughter. The daughter was the eldest and was married to Mu'izuddin Muhammad Ghori. Mu'izuddin was thus the brother-in-law of Abu Bikr. Shihabuddin Ali of Madin , Abu Bikr's brother, was martyred by the Turks of Khwarazm during the period of their domination. Abu Bikr probably had Kaziw (or Gaziw) and Timran as his appanage as Minhaj, waited upon him in this territory (618 AH/1221 AD) and was full of praise for Abu Bikr's urbanity and generosity. The name of Nasiruddin Abu Bikr is also found among the maliks of Ghiyasuddin Muhammad of Ghor. During the calamities that befell on Ghur and Ghazni on account of Mongol onslaught, Abu Bikr moved to Delhi and presented himself at the Court of Sultan Shamsuddin Iltutmish and was received by him with honour and respect. He died in Delhi in 620 AH/ 1223 AD. From this account, it is evident that Nasiruddin Abu Bikr had an illustrious lineage and was the nephew of the Ghorid brothers (Ghiasuddin and Mu'izuddin) and also the brother-in-law (brother of the wife) of Mu'izuddin Muhammad Ghori.

NOTES:

[1]See *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, vol. I, pp. 343-345

APPENDIX D

The Sufi -Ulama Interface: Nature of Conflict in the First Half of the Thirteenth Century

"The ulama are the partisans of reason, dervishes the partisans of love. The human intellect of the ulama dominates their sense of divine love, while attention to divine love among dervishes exceeds their use of the intellect" [1]

Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya (d.1325)

The entire medieval period of Indian history is surfeited with numerous evidences of 'Sufi-Ulama' altercations. There is a difference of opinion among historians regarding the nature of such relationship. The causes of these conflicts, their significance and their fall out has excited the curiosity of the readers and attracted the attention of the historians. This appendix concentrates on the Sufi-Ulama interface in the first half of the thirteenth century in the light of the political ambitions, ideological disparity and personal pursuits of the persons involved. It also tries to explore the over-all relationship between these two sections of medieval Indian society: Sufi, the follower of *tariqat* (the path) and Ulama, the upholder of the Shariah. The first half of the thirteenth century was the period of the commencement of the Muslim rule in India. It would be interesting to see if the rulers had any self-interest in promoting both these groups or was there any attempt on their part even to pit one against the other? I have tried to discuss the Sufi-Ulama interface with special reference to the Sufis of the Suhrawardi *silsilah* who were not only

present in India in large numbers but also commanded a large following during the early thirteenth century.

I

Etymologically, the term 'Sufi' is derived from the Arabic word S*uf* meaning 'wool or wool-clad'. The first Caliph Abu Bakr (d. 634) is reported to have presented himself before Prophet Muhammad clad in a woolen blanket, after giving away all his riches in the way of God, indicating probably that it was a dress appropriate for the one who has renounced worldly wealth and pleasures.[2] According to some Sufis, the term 'Sufi' is derived from *ashab-i-suffah* (people of the bench). It is notable that *ashab-i-suffah* were a group of people who were among the followers of the Prophet. They lived in his mosque at Madinah and led a life of voluntary poverty, devotion and self-mortification.[3] These men served as the role models for the later Sufis who is said to have derived the terminology from these followers of the Prophet. The famous Suhrawardi saint, Shaikh Shihabuddin Suhrawardi (d. 1235) asserts that *muqarrabun* (those who are in close proximity with God) is the Quranic term for the Sufis.[4] It is also believed that the fabric of the *tariqat* was woven round the *khirqah* received by the Prophet on the occasion of *M'iraj* (ascent) and was handed over to Ali by him. While Shariah is supposed to govern the external life of the Muslims, *tariqat* took care of his needs in spiritual sphere.[5] Other words from which the term Sufi is said to have been derived are *safa* (purity), and *saff-i-awwal* (first row). In short, Sufi signifies a man who had renounced worldly pleasures (*tark-i-dunya*) and dedicated himself to the attainment of the Supreme Reality (God).

The Ulama (sing. alim), in turn, constituted a very influential section of Muslim society in the middle ages. They were held in high esteem on account of their religious learning and in

many traditions of the Prophet they have been referred as his heirs.[6] The Prophet has, for instance, once observed that "the ulama are much superior in dignity and status to others……After them, rank the kings".[7] Anybody who had acquired religious knowledge up to a prescribed standard could become an *alim*. The prestige and influence of an alim depended upon his devotion to learning as well as his piety. The Ulama were however classified primarily into two categories: the *Ulama-i-akhrat* and the *Ulama-i-dunya*.[8] The *Ulama-i-akhrat* led a life of pious devotion and religious learning and generally kept themselves aloof from political affairs and materialistic pursuits. The *Ulama-i-dunya*, on the contrary, were to a large extent mundane in their outlook. They hankered for wealth and worldly prestige, mixed freely with the ruling elite and rendered moral support to all their activities, good or bad. It was this latter group who time and again brought forth an issue against the Sufis.

II

In order to understand the Sufi-Ulama relationship in the first half of the thirteenth century, it is imperative to have an idea of the Sufi sects that were predominant in India during this period, the ideology of the principal adherents of these sects and their attitude towards the state. The rise of the Turkish power in India coincided with the plantation of two Sufi orders (*silsilahs*) on the Indian soil: the Chishti and the Suhrawardi. Introduced in India by Khwajah Mo'inuddin Chishti (d. 1236) and Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya (d. 1262) respectively, these orders left an undeniable mark on the Indian society. Of them, the Chishtis were destined to enjoy unparallel spiritual influence and popular acclaim. However, in the early thirteenth century, the situation does not seem to be so. The Chishti saints have yet to attain the status and

following that they came to enjoy subsequently. Even no contemporary record of Mo'inuddin's life and activities is extant. The two major Chishti texts of the fourteenth century, *Fawa'idul Fu'ad* (compiled 1322) and *Khair-ul-Majalis* (compiled 1354) do not refer to the saint at all. The information provided by another fourteenth century Chishti text *Siyal-ul-Auliya* lacks detail. Therefore for the saint's biographical details, we have to turn to *Siyar-ul-Arifin,* a Suhrawardi text compiled in India almost three hundred years after his death. No authentic account of Mo'inuddin's life and activities in Ajmer is available.[9] In fact, his reputation as a man of God grew gradually. But by the middle of the fourteenth century his grave at Ajmer had become a popular centre of pilgrimage. In 1332, Sultan Muhammad Tughlaq (r. 1325 – 1351) visited the shrine and gave lavish grants to its attendants.[10] It assumed new height during the reign of Emperor Akbar. Therefore, it can be safely said that Shaikh Mo'inuddin Chishti as a saint had not assumed so much eminence as has been attained by his shrine later on. When the Chishtis rose to prominence in the fourteenth century and Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya (d. 1325) became a cult figure in Delhi, the genealogy and aura of the sect was perhaps traced back and awareness about Mo'inuddin Chishti, the founder of the sect in India and to which Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya belonged, was created. By the thirteenth century, it was commonly believed in the Muslim World that a great saint's *baraka* (blessings) gets transferred after his death to his descendents as well as to the place of his burial.[11]

Shaikh Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki (d. 1235) was, therefore, the first saint of the Chishti sect about whom sufficient information is available. A native of Aush he is said to have joined the circle of the disciples of Shaikh Mo'inuddin in Baghdad and subsequently became his chief khalifa. He arrived in India in the early thirteenth century and took up residence in Kilokheri, a

suburb of Delhi. In 1333, when Ibn-i-Battuta came to Delhi, he found the shrine of Shaikh Bakhtiyar Kaki as one of the three popular places of veneration in the city.[12]

The third Chishti saint of the first half of the thirteenth century was Baba Farid (d. 1271), the spiritual successor of Shaikh Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki. He used to reside in Ajodhan, far from the seat of government and never meddled in politics or visited the royal court. He is said to have remarked once that if anyone desired elevation in his spiritual rank, he ought to keep away from hereditary princes.[13] Interestingly enough, in spite of his predilection for *sam'a*, a source of perpetual strife between the Sufi and the Ulama in the Middle Ages, no incidence of conflict of Baba Farid with the Ulama of his time have been reported.

The early mystics of the Chishti *silsilah* preferred to cut themselves off completely from the kings, politics and government service. They believed that government service distracted a mystic from the single minded pursuit of his ideal which was 'living for the lord alone'.[14] By associating himself with the ruling elites, they believed, a Sufi isolated himself with the masses and ceased to be a man of commoners.

The other sect active in India along with the Chishtis was the Suhrawardi sect. The leading Suhrawardi saint of the period was undoubtedly Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya (1182-1262), a resident of Multan. However, Qazi Hamiduddin Nagori, Shaikh Jalaluddin Tabrezi (1244-45), Shaikh Nuruddin Mubarak Ghaznavi of the Suhrawardi fraternity were equally reputed. The Suhrawardi Sufis also stressed on the observance of the Shariah. Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya was very particular about the prescribed five times a day prayer. Once, some of the disciples of Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya, we are told, were performing ablutions. When they saw the Shaikh, all of them except one Sufi, hastened to pay their respect to him. He completed the

ablutions and then saluted the Shaikh. The Shaikh said that among all of you, he was the true dervish[15] for he performed his ablutions first. He was very particular about the recitation of the Quran as well.[16] It is said that even the slave girls of his khanqah would chant God's name.[17] Bahauddin Zakariya was also not in favour of overstressing the body in religious pursuits. He used to say that fast in the month of Ramzan was enough. He did not approve of the Chishti practice of bowing before a Shaikh. He emphasized on the observances of the external form of religion and never spared anybody found ignorant toward any form of religious devotion. The Suhrawardis rejected various ascetic exercises seeing in them the influence of the pagans.[18] The Suhrawardis, with the exception of Qazi Hamiduddin Nagori, avoided sam'a though they did not disapprove it out rightly. It was approved but with stringent conditions by their spiritual master, Shaikh Shihabuddin Suhrawardi.[19] Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya personally disliked it.

It is interesting to note that most of the Sufi-Ulama squabble of the early thirteenth century involved the Suhrawardi saints. In fact, instances of the conflict of Ulama in the first half of the thirteenth century with the Sufis of the Chishti sect are few and far between as compared to that of the Suhrawardis. It is almost paradoxical that the Ulama had conflict with any such group whose life-style and ideology was very much similar to that of their own. The Suhrawardi, in fact, adhered to the Shariah in the same manner as prescribed by the Ulama.

Now the question is why did the Ulama clash with the Suhrawardis? The answer perhaps lies in the approach of the Suhrawardi sect towards the state (which also distinguished them from the Chishtis). Their world view especially their attitude towards state patronage and government service was different from that of the Chishtis. The Suhrawardi saints consorted with kings, visited their court, accepted state grants and assistance and did not discourage government service. They believed that by establishing personal contact with the rulers, they could bring out

a change in their outlook. They did not justify exclusion of the rulers form their agenda of spiritual ascendancy for they believed that the life of people was inseparably connected with the ruler's thought, behavior and convictions.[20] By mixing with the ruler they could bring forth the misery of the subjects to the knowledge of the ruler. We are told that when Shaikh Ruknuddin (d. 1335), grandson of Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya and one of the greatest saint of the Suhrawardi fraternity, visited the Court, his palanquin would be flooded with the petitions from the people to be handed over to the Sultan.[21] Shaikh Ruknuddin justified his intimate relations with the ruling elite on the plea that by doing so he can intercede with the Sultan on behalf of the people. They did not mind affluence and did not mind joining state service. However, in mingling with the rulers and participating in political affairs, the Suhrawardi saints followed the traditions set-up by their illustrious predecessors in Baghdad (refer to chapter seven). From the very beginning the Suhrawardis did not mind cultivating cordial relations with the political elites. Drawing inspiration from the Quranic verse: "Obey Allah, obey his Prophet and those in authority amongst you", Shaikh Najibuddin Suhrawardi (d. 1168), the founder of the Suhrawardi fraternity, exhorted his disciples to pay full reverence to the rulers and abstain totally from finding faults with them.[22] In this sense they were giving serious competition to the Ulama and hence revulsion of the Ulama towards them. Both were vying with one another for state patronage, governmental subvention and the attention of the monarch.

III

This section is an elaboration of the last one. Here I have tried to explain the factors that motivated a monarch to rope in both these elements into their ambit. Given the political scenario

of the period, the ruler could not ignore either an eminent Sufi or an influential alim. A ruler's contact with the people and the respect he commanded in the religious circles made his position unalterable.

The Ulama were one of the most dominant sections of the Muslim society and highly esteemed among the Muslims. Though it is true that religious leaders played second fiddle in administration yet during the period under study their support for the sovereign was indispensible for strengthening his position against his adversaries. They had fairly stable relationship with the local communities where they acted as a teacher, religious expert and adjudicator in the day to day life of the Muslims at large.[23] The rulers therefore tried to cultivate friendship with the Ulama and seek their aid against their rivals. For instance, Sultan Iltutmish's (r. 1210-1236) attempt to consolidate and expand the empire brought him into direct conflict with the Turkish slave-officers of Mu'izuddin Muhammad Ghori (d. 1206) who challenged his claim to kingship. They were not Indians but the Sultan's fellow-brethrens and co-religionist who opposed him for their self-interest. In such a situation, it seems obvious that along with the nobility, the one who procured the support of the religious class would have an edge over the rest of the competitors. Needless to say, the influence of the Ulama presumably with the Muslim elite and soldiery and their support of Iltutmish helped consolidate his power in India.[24] In the same vein, in order to expand his support base, Prince Nasiruddin Mahmud (d. 1231) gave grants to a host of Ulama, Sayyids, recluses and pious men of the capital Delhi and other cities and towns out of the booty which he had seized from the Lakhnauti campaign (1227).[25] The goal of the Delhi sultan was to make Delhi a paramount power. For the Ulama, however, Delhi was the ultimate place of refuge for the uprooted Muslim community of Central and West Asia which could be developed into the chief metropolis of Islam. Sunil Kumar opines that in view of their

congruent aims, it is not surprising that the Ulama received warm welcome in Iltutmish's newly conquered domains or they co-operated with the Delhi Sultanate.[26] Most of the Ulama aspired for lucrative careers in state departments of justice, sadarat and ihtisab. In fact, the contribution of the Ulama of Delhi Sultanate to theological literature of their times was not very notable.[27] The majority of Ulama, the guardians of sacred law, were utterly materialistic in outlook and opportunist in conduct. They entered into an unholy alliance with the secular authorities and by twisting the rules of the Shariah, found sanction for the Sultan's un-Islamic practices.[28] None of the Ulama, for instance, expressed their displeasure and disapproval when Iltutmish declared Raziya (d. 1240) as his successor though a Prophetic tradition does not endorse this conduct. When Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud (d.1266) ascended the throne in 644/1245 A.D., the Sayyids and Ulama along with the maliks and amirs hastened to present themselves at the court and freely observed court etiquettes like kissing the hands of the Sultan and paying homage to him.[29] The Ulama were also involved in trade and commerce. This may be in keeping with the S*unna* of the Prophet who himself was a trader in his early life. Involvement with trade and commerce, however, necessitated proximity with the ruling elite. It helped augment their trade relations and multiplied their profit and provided greater stability to their business. As a corollary, it enhanced the popularity of the ruler amongst commercial group which facilitated the administration as well as expansion of his dominion. In addition, the association of scholars, artists, poets and Ulama (religious divines) with the royal court was a distinctive feature of the polity in Central Asia since the eleventh century.[30] They were also indispensible to the functioning of the state because the Muslim legal and religious treatises were in Arabic language. Its interpretation demanded persons well-versed in Islamic learning who could interpret the laws keeping in mind the Indian conditions and deliver judgment which could suite the Indian social system.

During the period under review the Ulama emerged as a power to reckon with in politics. Their influence was however political in nature. They did not influence the course of political process as analyst of Muslim law but as politicians who sided with one or other pressure groups regardless of their dignity and prestige. During the reign of Aibek (d. 1210) the Ulama did not intervene significantly in the affairs of the ruling elite. However, gradually they became conscious of their position in the Sultanate. They became bold and began to assert themselves. When Iltutmish ascended the throne (1210), a deputation of Ulama headed by Qazi Wajihuddin Kashani, waited upon the Sultan and desired to see his letter of manumission. Only after being fully satisfied, they took the oath of allegiance to him. Learning from this bitter experience, Iltutmish tried to placate them in every possible way. Time and again, he bestowed the post of Shaikh-ul-Islam upon influential members of this group in order to win their goodwill. He also constructed many madrasahs and *maktabs* and appointed these men as teachers. The Sultan very tactfully handled the Ulama and created such conditions that instead of turning critics of his policies, they started supporting him unquestionably. Soon their spirit of independence was lost and they fell in line with the wishes of the Sultan. It goes to the credit of Sultan Iltutmish who used all his manipulative skills and piety and succeeded in keeping a check on this influential faction. In the struggle between the crown and nobility after the death of Iltutmish (1236), their clout over Muslims at large was exploited by both the parties. For instance, when Amir-i-Hajib Badruddin Sunqar Rumi conspired to remove Sultan Bahram Shah (d.1242) from the throne, he convened a meeting which was attended, along with other important personnel, by Qazi-i-Mumalik Jalaluddin Kashani, Qazi Kabiruddin and Shaikh Muhammad- i- Shami.[31] Again in 1257, during the reign of Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud, the Shaikh-ul-Islam Sayyid Jamaluddin, Qutubuddin and Qazi Shamsuddin Bharaiji invited the rebels Izzuddin Balban Kashlu Khan and

Malik Qutlugh Khan to march on the capital and assured them that they would give up the gates (of the city) to them.[32] Therefore, it can be said that many members of the clerical class were involved in politics and the sovereign was practically compelled to placate them in order to win their support.

In the same way, the Sultan could not afford to neglect the role a Sufi could play in the making of the Sultanate. The reason for such compulsion are not far to seek. During the period under review the Delhi Sultanate was in a state of infancy. The rulers especially Iltutmish were trying hard to give it a definite shape. Given the circumstances they could not afford to pick up quarrel with their non-Muslim subjects who were in majority in India. They knew very well that a pan – Indian resistance by the Hindu majority would prove fatal to the infant Sultanate. The situation demanded a healing touch to reassure the Hindu majority that the Sultanate was committed to their safety and security. The Sufis with their tolerant and broad minded outlook could very well provide this healing touch. These God – fearing men had the potential for bringing about unity among the heterogeneous elements that made up the Indian milieu.[33] They were capable of toning down the animosity between the various communities present in India. As a result of Mongol invasion of Central and West Asia many saints, scholars, noblemen etc. had taken refuge in Delhi. They knew very well that the chances of their returning back to their homeland were dim and that Delhi was now the final resting-place for them. Their presence in large numbers was likely to arouse the suspicion and fear of the majority community. The Delhi Sultans could therefore hardly afford policies or actions that might reinforce opposition to their conquest.[34] A liberal and tolerant attitude towards the indigenous people was thus required. The Sufis encouraged the ruling elite to be tolerant and benevolent towards the Hindus. These men of piety unleashed syncretic forces which facilitated the development of a common cultural

outlook. More importantly, there was a belief that an offence against a Sufi / Shaikh would lead to the downfall of the Sultan. It also led credence to the belief that such Sufi / Shaikh also had the power to bestow kingship on an individual.[35] In the absence of a fixed law of succession such a belief was more likely to flourish.[36] The chronicles of the Delhi Sultanate are replete with anecdotes of the bestowal of kingship by Sufis on persons of lesser renown and ordinary background. It shows the kind of reverence the hagiographers had for the Sufis and to what extent these men of piety influenced the mind of people at large. The Sufis seems to have a considerable hold on the men of letters as well and were respected by them. Whether it was Minhaj, Isami or Afif all have mentioned some incident or the other about the prophecy of a Sufi or a dervish gifting a crown to future Sultans. Moreover, for non-literate, non- Arabic speaking villagers or pastoralists, saints were not just the interpreters of Islam or mere representatives of religion. For them, Islam was what they preached and practiced.[37] Along with the Ulama, they enjoyed massive popular appeal. We know that when Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki decided to leave Delhi and settle in Ajmer, the denizens of the city panicked. They followed him en -mass and requested him to stay behind. Therefore, these men could be utilized by the ruler as a 'safety valve' or counterpoise against the corrupt and greedy Ulama.

Moreover both the Sufi and the Ulama were capable of taking the role of a mediator at the time of foreign invasions and internal crisis. When Nizam ul Mulk (Muhazzabuddin) conspired against Bahram Shah (d. 1242) during the Mongol campaign and turned the nobles against the Sultan, the latter dispatched Sayyid Qutubuddin, the Shaikh ul Islam of Delhi for pacifying the rebel forces.[38] In the same vein during the conflict with the Mongol commander Sali Nuyin in 1247, Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya interceded for the town and saved it from destruction. He negotiated successfully a peaceful settlement with the Mongol representative,

Malik Shamsuddin.[39] Both these groups also extended moral support to the rulers if need arises. The sultan often asked their *khatib* (prayer leader) to deliver sermons before the rebels to pacify them. Minhaj, for instance, was directed to deliver discourses within the enclosure of the royal camp after victory in Uchch campaign in 1228[40] and the Gwalior expedition of 1232.[41] Again, during the Mongol invasion in 1242, he was commanded by Sultan Bahram Shah to give lecture to the people of Delhi assembled in the *Qasr- i- Safed* (White Palace) who in turn pledged their loyalty to the Sultan.[42] We also know that during the Mongol invasion of Multan, Qabacha asked for help from Shaikh Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki, who assisted him by extending moral support.[43] Shaikh Bakhtiyar Kaki also provided his moral support to Sultan Iltutmish in the construction of Hauz- i- Shamsi.

Needless to say, both the groups were equally important for the existence of the Sultanate. The Early Turkish sultans of Delhi therefore looked for the support of these groups in order to consolidate their power and build an integrated and compact polity in India. This policy was initiated by Iltutmish who tried to enlist the support of as many men of religion as possible for the efficient running of his administration. Since the Chishtis were reluctant to take up government jobs (Shaikh Bakhtiyar Kaki had, for instance, turned down the offer of the post of Shaikh ul Islam) the Sultan invited the Suhrawardis to extend their support and the Suhrawardis obliged by acceding to his request and willingly accepted the post of Shaikh ul Islam and S*adr*.

All the Suhrawardi Sufis were highly popular both in India and outside. We know that Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya (d. 1262), Shaikh Jalaluddin Tabrizi (d. 1241/1244), Qazi Hamiduddin Nagori (d. 1244), Sayyid Nuruddin Mubarak Ghaznavi (d. 1235) and Shaikh Majduddin Haji were present in India during the period of Iltutmish in the first half of the thirteenth century. It is clear that a number of khalifahs and disciples of Shihabuddin Abu Hafs

Suhrawardi had settled in the sub-continent in the first half of the thirteenth century and most of them enjoyed considerable popular esteem.

It can be safely assumed that in the first half of the thirteenth century, the Sultans of Delhi were far more closely allied to the saints of the Suhrawardi order in comparison to the Chishti saints. All the prominent khalifahs of Shaikh Shihabuddin Suhawardi in India were not only attached to the Court of Iltutmish but also enjoyed his patronage. The Suhrawardis were obviously more well-known in India during the reign of Iltutmish and his progeny. Even though they came to South Asia later than the Chishtis, they came in large numbers.[44] As a group, they were thus numerically superior and more visible in the thirteenth century both in Delhi court and in the frontier province of Multan. They could thus serve the interest of the state much more than the Sufis of any other sect.

The only Chishti saint of the period who we can link with the Delhi Sultanate was Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki. However, it was also very marginal. Though he extended moral support to Iltutmish and Qabacha, he was reluctant to take up any post offered to him by the Sultan or sought any favour from the State machinery. On the contrary, the Suhrawardi saints didn’t mind forging relations with the ruling elite. The large endowments *(*awqaf*)* given by the state to these Multani saints depicts the state’s predilection for a Sufi order located at the periphery of the empire. Needless to say that these Sufis were seen by the political elites as a potential ally in keeping the frontier provinces like Multan as it had been incessantly intruded by the foreign adversaries and surrounded by the warring local inhabitants both of which can be a disturbing factor for the politics of Delhi Sultanate.

In this background of Sufi – State rapprochement and alliance, the real cause of conflict between the Sufi and the Ulama in the early thirteenth century become amply clear. Both of them were eager for state patronage and it was quite natural that the Ulama looked upon the Sufis as competitors and rivals to their authority. They saw in them a potential source of danger to their position and prowess at any point of time. Moreover, like the Ulama, most of the early Sufis were also men of great learning and possessed thorough knowledge of Muslim law (shariah) and Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh). Many Sufis had in fact studied with the same teacher and attended the same institution as by an alim. Many Sufis had also started their career as an alim or had aspired for a government position. We know that even Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya desired to be a Qazi but was dissuaded by Shaikh Najibuddin Mutawakkil, younger brother of Baba Farid.[45] Therefore the popularity and the pre-eminence of the Suhrawardi saints in Delhi and elsewhere was a thorn in the flesh of the Ulama and consequently they felt insecure in the presence of such alims who were also known for their spiritual prowess. They could pose a challenge to their authority as interpreter of the Shariah. The rulers also held them in high esteem. We know that when Shaikh Saifuddin Bakharzi, the disciple of Shaikh Najmuddin Kubra, was instructed by the latter to go to Bukhara and settle there, Shaikh Saifuddin protested by saying that there were many an Ulama in Bukhara and that they were both jealous of Sufis and angry with them.[46]

There is also evidence that the hospices of the Sufis were frequented by influential people. The khanqah of Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya, for instance, is said to have been frequently visited by the nobles, merchants, traders, etc. This definitely added to the prestige of the Sufis in the eyes of the people at large which obviously would not have been relished by the Ulama. The presence of a group of Sufis who did not mind acquiring official appointments and state

sponsorship certainly hampered the political ambitions of the Ulama and was therefore detested by them.

IV

In this section, I propose to deal with few instances of Sufi- Ulama strife in the first half of the thirteenth century. It would also be my endeavour to explain appropriate reasons responsible for these altercations.

One of the well- known tussles of such kind in the early thirteenth century was between Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya and Qazi Qutubuddin Kashani. The Qazi was a distinguished alim of Multan. He was taken in high esteem by the then monarch of Multan, Nasiruddin Qabacha, who had even constructed a madrasah for him. The religious elites of Multan, particularly the Ulama, did not like the presence of Bahauddin Zakariya in their town because he belonged to the Sufi brotherhood which excelled both in legal and spiritual matters.[47] Due to the difference of opinion over the method of the observance of namaz and other related issues, Kashani once forbade Shaikh Zakariya to pray at his madrasah and desired that he should pray at his own khanqah. After this incident Shaikh Zakariya never offered Morning Prayer in the madrasah of Qazi Qutubuddin.[48] According to Qamar ul Huda," the heart of Suhrawardi- ulama religious differences lies in the ways Suhrawardi were able to balance their inner spiritual aspirations with the outer worldly demands of living according to the law."[49] However, the conflict seems to have been motivated by mundane considerations. Going by the doctrines of the Suhrawardis, there was not much difference between them and the Ulama. The altercation was purely personal owing to Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya's political propensity and Qazi Qutubuddin Kashani must have taken it as potentially disadvantageous to his own position in Multan. On the other hand,

the Qazi's influence at the Multan court was perhaps detrimental to the interest of the Shaikh who was himself not averse to remain in the good books of the ruling authority. It can therefore be assumed that the tussle between the Shaikh and the Qazi which was ostensibly an altercation based on the disparity between the doctrines of Sufism and Shariah, was obviously of mundane nature. Needless to say that this is one of the many instances of the tension between a person enjoying royal patronage and a Sufi longing to get the state patronage like his predecessors. The same Bahauddin Zakariya wrote letters to Iltutmish with the connivance of another Qazi of Multan[50] whose name has been mentioned by Jamali Kanboh as Qazi Sharafuddin.[51] Qazi Qutubuddin Kashani's political proclivity is demonstrated by another incident. Once he visited Delhi at the invitation of Sultan Iltutmish.[52] On reaching Delhi, he found that the Sultan was sitting in the quarter reserved for amusement. Shaikh Nooruddin Mubarak Ghaznavi was also present. The Qazi approached the Sultan, greeted him and expressed his desire to be seated next to him. The Sultan gladly granted his desire. The point to note is that both Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya and Qazi Kashani preferred proximity with the ruling elite and made sincere efforts to fulfill their desires.

Another infamous incident connected with the Sufi- Ulama interface that has been mentioned in Sufi *tazkiras* is the episode of Shaikh Jalaluddin Tabrizi. A Suhrawardi saint, he had been falsely accused of adultery by the Shaikh ul Islam of Delhi, Najmuddin Sughra. In *Fawai'dul Fu'ad*, it is mentioned that Najmuddin created such a furore that Shaikh Jalaluddin was compelled to leave Hindustan.[53] *Siyar ul Arifin* furnishes the details of the incident. When Jalaluddin Tabrizi reached Delhi from Baghdad, Iltutmish came out of the city to greet the Shaikh.[54] The reception accorded by the Sultan to Shaikh Tabrizi made the Shaikh ul Islam Najmuddin Sughra jealous. After his failure to poison the ears of the Sultan against Shaikh

Tabrizi, Najmuddin Sughra finally slapped the Saint with the charge of adultery.[55] The author of *Akhbar ul Akhyar* also refers to Shaikh Jalaluddin Tabrizi being accused of something egregious by the Shaikh ul Islam.[56] The ruling prince, Sultan Iltutmish is said to have convened a meeting (mahzar*)* to discuss the issue.[57] Though the authenticity of the report regarding mahzar is highly doubtful, the incident surfaces the Sufi- Ulama tension to the core. It again seems to be a case of sheer jealousy on the part of an administrative officer against a man who could be a threat to his position in future. It undoubtedly suggests an undercurrent of personal rivalry. The frequent reference of this episode in medieval Sufi literature shows that there was a fierce competition between the Sufi and the Ulama to prove their respective superiority in the court and to undermine each other's attempt to get closer to the Sultan.[58]

Another Sufi- Ulama squabble which is mentioned in Sufi texts also involves Najmuddin Sughra. It is reported that Najmuddin did not pay proper respect to Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti when the saint visited the Sheikh ul Islam's place. On being asked to explain his conduct, he complained that Shaikh Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki, the khalifah of Mo'inuddin was indifferent to his position as shaikh ul islam and considered it of no consequence[59]. It was because of this remark that Mo'inuddin Chishti decided to take Bakhtiyar Kaki back to Ajmer. However, he refrained from doing so on account of the request of the people of Delhi as well as Sultan Iltutmish to let Shaikh Bakhtiyar Kaki stay in the city. It was a case of grudge of shaikh ul islam. Shaikh Bakhtiyar Kaki was a popular figure in Delhi. Najmuddin Sughra was perhaps apprehensive of losing his position to Shaikh Bakhtiyar Kaki as Sultan Iltutmish had offered the same post to the saint which he had refused.[60]

Another instance of Sufi- Ulama acrimony is evident in the conversation of Shaikh Jalaluddin Tabrizi with the Governor of Badaun, Qazi Kamaluddin Jafri. One day Shaikh Tabrizi

went to meet the governor of Badaun. The Qazi was offering prayers. On hearing this, the Shaikh remarked,"Does a Qazi know how to offer prayer?"[61] Next day the Qazi paid a visit to the Shaikh and asked the reason for such a remark. The Shaikh replied that the scholars (ulama) pray in the direction of Ka'ba but the beggars of God (fuqara) never offered prayers unless they see God.[62] A similar episode of a Sufi's attempt to establish his superiority over an alim is related about Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya. Once the Shaikh paid a visit to a devout man of Multan named Sulaiman. The Shaikh asked him to perform two genuflections of prayers in front of him. The manwhile praying did not put his feet in the prescribed manner. When again and again he failed to do so in the way Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya wanted him to do, the Shaikh ordered Sulaiman to settle in Uchch.[63]

Isami has narrated one more episode of Sufi- Ulama discord during the reign of sultan Iltutmish. Two muftis (jurists), Qazi Sa'd and Qazi Imad who enjoyed the confidence of the king (Iltutmish) presented themselves before him and requested him to summon Qazi Hamiduddin Nagori, a Suhrawardi saint and chief exponent of Sam'a in Delhi. The Sultan convened a meeting to discuss the legality of Sam'a. Qazi Hamiduddin Nagori was also invited. When hard pressed on the issue of Sam'a, he replied, "Verily it is forbidden if the listener is an ordinary scholar (ahl- i- qal). It is permissible if the listener is a man of path (ahl- i- hal)."[64] This is perhaps the first incident in the early thirteenth century where a discussion, about the alleged infringement of the Shariah by a Sufi, was conducted in the presence of a Sultan. Though nothing substantial came out from this discussion in terms of issuing a verdict against the legality or otherwise of Sam'a as demanded by a few Ulama, on closer look, this episode also suggests a faint undercurrent of rivalry between the two groups. Both the jurists enjoyed the favour of the ruler, while the Shaikh was also held in great esteem by the monarch who, on seeing him, would

stand up in respect.[65] One more case involving Qazi Hamiduddin Nagori has come down to us. Once, many of his contemporaries wrote legal opinions against the practice of Sam'a.[66] Everyone decreed that Sam'a was forbidden. Even a jurist friend of Qazi Hamiduddin Nagori wrote an adverse opinion, which was reported to the Qazi. When the friend came to see him, Nagori inquired about it and remarked, "All those other jurists who wrote rejoinder to my decree, in my opinion, are still fetuses in their mothers' wombs, but as for you, you are a newborn infant. Such a child! "[67]

It seems that the question of Sam'a had always been a bone of contention between the Sufis and the Ulama. It is also certain that most of the time the Ulama employed Sam'a as a tool to humiliate a popular Sufi saint. Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya has himself observed that there were quite a god number of Ulama who did not say anything about Sam'a while some without actual knowledge picked up a quarrel.[68]

V

It can therefore be concluded that the Sufi- Ulama strife in the first half of the thirteenth century was motivated primarily by political rivalry, mutual jealousy and personal animosity between two groups. In this period the Suhrawardi dominated the spiritual space in Hindustan. Their popular appeal and connection with the ruling elites obliged the rulers to be in close proximity to them. The Ulama too were equally essential for the well-being of the Sultanate. At the time of the establishment of the Sultanate, the Ulama were bold and free from any outside influence. With the passage of time, they became engrossed in worldly pleasures, lost their independence of character and started associating themselves with the ruling house. They

became corrupt and came to be divided into two categories- U*lama- i- akhrat* and U*lama- i-dunya.* It was the Ulama- i- dunya who most of the time held grudge against the Sufis, especially the Suhrawardis. The reason perhaps lies in the attitude of the Suhrawardi saints towards the state. Many Suhrawardis, like the Ulama - i-dunya were interested in politics. They hankered for state patronage and government services. In this sense, they were becoming stiff competitors to the Ulama and thus the cause of their indignation between the two. Most of the cases of Sufi-Ulama discord that has been reported in the early thirteenth century involved a Suhrawardi Sufi on one hand and an alim on the other. There is a bleak possibility that in some cases the tussle were driven entirely by the laid-back attitude of some Sufis towards the Shariah and the vexation of the Ulama on account of that. The Suhrawardis were the follower of Shariah in very much the similar manner in which it has been preached by the Ulama. It is therefore unlikely that there arose a dispute between them on an issue the crux of which was disregard for the Shariah. In fact, the nature of Sufi-Ulama dispute was more mundane and less religious. Whether it was Qutubuddin Kashani's squabble with Shaikh Bahauiddin Zakariya or Najmuddin Sughra's allegation against Jalaluddin Tabrizi or his accusation about Shaikh Bakhtiyar Kaki, all imply an inkling of personal antagonism. It augmented manifold in the presence of a sultan (Iltutmish) who gave equal importance to the Sufis and the Ulama due to self- interest (see chapter seven). However, both these groups cannot be divided into two water-tight compartments. Generally, a Sufi was also an alim of high repute, well versed in all branches of Islamic laws and learning. Moreover, on certain doctrinal issues the Ulama and the Sufis also found common ground. We know for instance that along with Qazi Hamiduddin Nagori who gave Sam'a a legal sanction in Delhi, it was Minhajuddin Juzjani, a member of the Ulama fraternity, who had lent his unconditional support the practice of Sam'a in the capital city.[69]

NOTES:

[1] Amir Hasan Sijzi, *Fawa'idul Fu'ad*, translated into English by Bruce B. Lawrence, p. 233

[2] N. R. Farooqi, *Medieval India: Essays on Sufism, Diplomacy and History,* op.cit., p. 05

[3] Ibid, p. 06

[4] Ibid, p. 04

[5] I. A. Zilli, 'Early Sufi Thought in India' *Proceedings of Indian History Congress*, 38th session, 1977, pp. 279-280

[6] K. A. Nizami, *Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India during the Thirteenth Century*, p. 150

[7] Ibid, p. 150

[8] Ziyauddin Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, translated into Urdu by Sayyid Moin ul Haqq, pp. 249-250

[9] N. R. Farooqi, op. cit., p. 64

[10] Ibid, p. 65

[11] Richard M. Eaton, 'The Political and Religious Authority of the Shrine of Baba Farid' in Richard M. Eaton (ed.) *Essays on Islam and Indian History* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 206

[12] Ibn-i-Battuta, *Rehla* (The Travels Of Ibn-i-Battuta), translated into English by H. A. R. Gibb, vol. III, p. 625

[13] *Fawa'idul Fu'ad*, p. 35

[14] K. A. Nizami, op. cit., p. 240

[15] *Fawa'idul Fu'ad,* p. 339

[16] Ibid, pp. 85-86; Hamid bin Fazlullah Jamali Kamboh, *Siyal ul Arifin*, translated into Urdu by Muhammad Ayub Qadri, p. 167

[17] "So busy was everyone (in Multan) in remembering God, performing prayers, and reciting invocations that even the slave girls while grinding corn would enchant God's name", *Fawa'idul Fu'ad,* pp. 251-252

[18] K. A. Nizami, op. cit., p. 222

[19] "All the possible graces have been bestowed on Shaikh Shihabuddin Suhrawardi….except the taste for music", *Fawa'idul Fu'ad,* p. 118

[20] K. A. Nizami, op. cit., p. 249

[21] *Siyal ul Arifin*, pp. 202- 203

[22] Abu Najib Abdul Qahir Suhrawardi, *Adab ul Muridin*, quoted by K.A. Nizami, *Some Aspects…..,*p. 249

[23] Sunil Kumar, *Emergence of the Delhi Sultanate (1192- 1286)* p. 217

[24] Aziz Ahmad, 'The Role of Ulama in Indo Muslim History', *Studia Islamica*, vol. 31, 1970, p. 04

[25] Minhaj-i-Siraj Juzjani, *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, translated into English by Major H. G. Raverty, vol. I, p. 629

[26] Sunil Kumar, op. cit., p. 237

[27] Aziz Ahmad, op. cit., p. 05

[28] A. B. M. Habibullah, *The Foundation of Muslim Rule in India*, p. 287

[29] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, vol. I, pp. 675-676

[30] I. H. Siddiqui, 'Muslim Intellectual Life in India' in I. H. Siddiqui (ed.) *Medieval India: Essays in Intellectual Thought and Culture,* (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers and Distributors, 2003), vol..i, p. 81

[31] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, vol. I, p. 652

[32] Ibid, p. 707

[33] K. A. Nizami, *State and Culture in Medieval India* (New Delhi: Adam Publishers and Distributors, 1985), p. 180

[34] Muzaffar Alam, *The Language of Political Islam in India c.1200- 1800*, p. 87

[35] Simon Digby, 'The Sufi Shaikh and the Sultan: A Conflict of Claim to Authority in Medieval India', *Iran*, vol. 28, 1990, p. 75

[36] Ibid, p. 75

[37] Richard Eaton, op. cit., p. 203

[38] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, vol. I, pp. 658-659

[39] Saif ibn Muhammad Yaqub Harawi, *Tarikh Nama- i- Hirat,* quoted in Qamar ul Huda, *Striving for Divine Union: Spiritual Exercises for Suhrawardi Sufis,* op. cit., p. 141 and K. A. Nizami, *Some Aspects…..,*p. 256

[40] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, vol. I, p. 615

[41] Ibid, p. 619

[42] Ibid, p. 656

[43] *Fawa'idul Fu'ad,* p. 205. It is mentioned that Shaikh Bakhtiyar Kaki handed over an arrow to Qabacha and asked him to shoot it in the direction of the invading army, which by that time had reached the walls of the city of Multan. Qabacha did the same and the next day the army of the enemy vanished. However, in reality, the Mongols had decided to retreat due to the onset of the summer season.

[44] Anna Suvorova, *Muslim Saints of South Asia (eleventh to fifteenth centuries),* p.134

[45] *Fawa'idul Fu'ad*, p. 24

[46] *Fawa'idul Fu'ad*, p. 367

[47] Qamar ul Huda, op. cit., p. 138

[48] *Fawa'idul Fu'ad*, p. 344

[49] Qamar ul Huda, op. cit., p. 139

[50] *Fawa'idul Fu'ad*, p. 219; *Siyar ul Arifin*, p. 158

[51] *Siyar ul Arifin*, p. 158

[52] *Fawai'dul Fu'ad*, p.344-345

[53] *Fawai'dul Fu'ad*, p.246

[54] *Siyar ul Arifin*, p. 241

[55] Ibid, p.244

[56] *Akhbar al Akhyar*, p. 124

[57] *Siyar ul Arifin*, p. 245

[58] Qamar ul Huda, op. cit., p. 120

[59] *Siyar ul Arifin*, p. 29; *Siyar ul Auliya,* p. 139

[60] *Siyar ul Arifin*, p. 28

[61] *Fawa'idul Fu'ad*, p. 345; *Siyar ul Arifin*, p. 248

[62] *Fawa'idul Fu'ad*, p. 345

[63] Ibid, p. 328

[64] Isami, *Futuh al Salatin*, translated into English by Agha Mahdi Husain , vol. II, p.231-232

[65] Ibid, p.230

[66] *Fawa'idul Fu'ad*, p. 349; *Siyar ul Arifin*, p. 214; *Akhbar al Akhyar*, p. 103

[67] *Fawa'idul Fu'ad*, p. 350

[68] Ibid, p. 335-336

[69] *Fawa'idul Fu'ad*, p. 348; *Akhbar al Akhyar*, p. 105

CONCLUSION

The foregoing account of the life and works of Sultan Shamsuddin Iltutmish leaves no doubt that he was the greatest monarch of the Early Sultanate period. Right from the time of his accession to the throne at Delhi, he dedicated himself completely to the task of making the Sultanate of Delhi an indomitable force. He worked tirelessly with determination, energy and great éclat to achieve his objectives. The spark of genius that Mu'izuddin Muhammad Ghori had seen in him during the Khokhar campaign in 1205 provided life breath to the Sultanate for twenty-six years. It is not for nothing that R. P. Tripathi has stated that the history of Muslim sovereignty begins properly speaking with Iltutmish.[1] When Iltutmish was raised to the throne at Delhi, North India consisted of a cluster of small independent principalities under the Turkish governors and Indian princes. Chaos and anarchy prevailed in most parts of the region. He subdued one by one all his major rivals and pretenders to throne and prevented the infant Turkish state in India from passing into oblivion. Tajuddin Yalduz, Nasiruddin Qabacha, Husamuddin Iwaz Khalji, diverse Indian chieftains of Rajputana and Central India as well as the representatives of foreign powers in the North-west were defeated and forced to acknowledge the suzerainty of the Delhi Sultan. By his deeds he proved that the choice of Delhi nobles to offer him the throne was absolutely correct and in the best interests of that small Turkish principality in India. Fakr i Mudabbir call Iltutmish *Zul al- Aman* (Surety of Peace).[2] Isami describes him an India conquering monarch (*Khusrav- i Hindgir*).[3] In his person, Hindustan certainly discovered a supreme political leader she had been looking for a long time.

Not only internal chaos and confusion was eliminated and situation was brought under control, Iltutmish also rescued Delhi from frequent external aggression. His refusal to give the Khwarazm Prince Jalaluddin Mangbarni an entry into his kingdom, which could have jeopardized the sovereign status of Delhi, was a calculated and well thought out move and clearly demonstrates his diplomatic acumen. The presence of Mangbarni in the Sultanate would definitely have given the Mongols a pretext to invade India and would have exposed the country to untold miseries and sufferings. In the same vein, the attainment of the investiture from the Caliph of Baghdad was another feather in the Sultan's cap and created an honourable place for the Sultanate of Delhi in the comity of Muslim states.

Iltutmish's contribution to the creation of an administrative structure for the Sultanate of Delhi is second to none. He made the Iqta' system the pivot of his administration and assigned the Iqta's to his officers purely on the basis of merit and utility to the state. The Sultan's contribution to the evolution of an efficient military organization for the Sultanate was no less significant. He created a large standing army which was directly recruited and paid by the centre. Barani writes that the numerical strength of Iltutmish's army, war weapons, elephants and horses was more than that of Balban.[4] The credit of building a capital for the Sultanate also goes to Iltutmish. Lahore, the erstwhile capital of the Ghaznavids and Qutbuddin Aibak would have been a natural choice to become the capital of the Sultanate owing to its pre-eminent position in the eleventh and twelfth centuries but Iltutmish very wisely chose Delhi to have the honour of being the seat of the Sultanate, situated as it was in a safe and secure location far away from the turbulent region and politics of the north- western frontier of India. The very fact that Delhi continues to be the seat of government even today speak volumes of Iltutmish's political sagacity and statesmanship.

Delhi soon developed into a magnificent metropolis under the careful fostering of Iltutmish and continued to prosper thereafter. A host of Ulama, Sufis, poets, men of letters, administrators and warriors flocked to Delhi in search of patronage, employment and shelter. Innumerable People who had lost their family, land and wealth in Central Asia on account of Mongol onslaught migrated to Delhi in their quest for a safe haven. Iltutmish also gave the Sultanate a well-structured and advanced monetary system. His reign is rightly regarded as water shed in the numismatic history of medieval India. Numerous coins of gold, silver and copper were issued during his reign. The silver Tankah and billon Jital introduced by him became the back bone of the Indian monetary system and later served as the basis of the currency system of the Mughals. The exchange value between Tankah and other coins was carefully worked out and the weight of the metal content in all the coins was adroitly adjusted. The silver Tankah is even regarded as the predecessor of the modern rupee.

During the very life time of Iltutmish, the Delhi Sultanate emerged as a place of refuge for Muslims from all over the world. Renowned maliks and amirs from Central and West Asia presented themselves for asylum and employment at his court. In the presence of these stalwarts, writes Barani, the court of Iltutmish came to rival the court of Mahmud of Ghazna and the Saljuq Sultan Sanjar.[5] Like Mahmud, Iltutmish was also able to create such a solid legitimacy for his family to rule that in the turbulent thirty years after his demise (1236-1266) only members of his family were deemed fit to adorn the throne of Delhi. Even while nominating his successor Iltutmish gave importance to merit and talent and decided in favour of his daughter Razia (r. 1236-1240) much to the chagrin of his sons as well as nobles and in a daring violation of established norms. Only a man like Iltutmish was capable of taking such a bold step for which

due credit should be given to him. It would be no exaggeration to suggest that he was a man born much before his age.

Iltutmish selected his officers carefully and ensured that only the talented and the meritorious are appointed to high offices of the state. Although these officers belonged to diverse ethnic and social background, majority of them were Turkish slaves purchased by the Sultan from time to time. But these slaves did not have the monopoly of political offices in the Delhi Sultanate. A number of immigrants, Tajiks, Ghorids and even free-born Turks also formed part of the ruling class of Iltutmish. A host of individuals from Central and West Asia joined the court of Iltutmish as well. Their presence and administrative experience facilitated the consolidation of the Sultanate and enhanced the prestige of the court of Delhi. Apart from them many Khaljis, Abbysinians, slaves of former rulers and dignitaries and a few Indians also constituted part of the ruling class making it well-balanced and giving the monarch free hand to execute his will.

The Sultan respected the Sufi saints and the Ulama equally. He was aware of their popularity among the people at large and made sincere efforts not to give them any cause for complaint. He offered the post of Sheikh- al Islam to leading Sufis to elicit their moral support for his policies as well as to enhance the prestige of the Sultanate. He cultivated cordial relations with the renowned Chishti and Suhrawardi saints of his time which is not only a measure of his reverence for them but of his political astuteness as well. The intimate relations of Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya with Sheikh Shihabuddin Suhrawardi whom the Caliph of Baghdad held in great esteem perhaps helped Iltutmish in acquiring the investiture in 1229. He acted in accordance of the exigencies of his time and in keeping with the kind of political rivals he had to face and came out with flying colours.

The Sultan's contribution to the progress and promotion of art, literature and education was no less significant. It is true that in the early period when the Sultanate was still in infancy, he focused primarily on consolidating his political gains and dealing with the pretenders to the throne of Delhi but as soon as he was able to remove them from his path he gave due attention to cultural pursuits. The buildings he constructed were replete with new techniques like the use of geometric patterns on the screens in the mosques at Delhi and Ajmer, construction of non-functioning minarets flanking the central arch in Ajmer and Badaun mosques and the introduction of Paradisiacal imagery in his own tomb by inscribing the Quranic verses promising paradise to the faithful which subsequently became a model for most medieval mausoleums including the celebrated Taj Mahal. He also constructed a large madrasah known as Madrasah i Nasiriya for promoting education among the masses. His regime was not devoid of literary activities as well. Historians like Hasan Nizami, Fakhr i Mudabbir, Minhaj-i Siraj, Awfi and scholars like Majduddin Jajarmi, Qazi Hamiduddin Nagori were active in India during this period. Poets of the stature of Taj Rezah, Saiyid Sirajuddin, Ameer Ruhani and Nasiri also adorned his court.

Needless to say that Iltutmish's contribution in the making and the expansion of the Delhi Sultanate was second to none. Minhaj-i Siraj who served as the Chief Qazi of the Sultanate during the reign of his son Muizuddin Bahram Shah (r.1240 – 1242) and who knew Iltutmish first hand, has rightly observed that 'the kingdom of Hindustan, by the grace of Almighty God, and the favour of fortune, under the shadow of the guardianship of the Shamsi race, and the shade of the protection of Iltutmish's dynasty, became the focus of the people of Islam, and the orbit of the possessors of religion.'[6] It would therefore be no exaggeration to suggest that Prof. A. B. M. Habibullah's famous observation that 'Aibak outlined the Delhi Sultanate and its

sovereign status, Iltutmish was unquestionably its first king'[7] need to be modified. In fact, it should read as follows: **Iltutmish outlined the Delhi Sultanate and its sovereign status, and he was unquestionably its first king.**

NOTES:

[1] R.P. Tripathi, *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration,* p. 24

[2] I.H. Siddiqui, *Indo Persian Historiography up to the Thirteenth Century*, p. 24

[3] Isami, *Futuh al Salatin*, vol. II, p. 218

[4] Barani, *Tarikh i Firuzshahi,* p. 80

[5] Barani, *Tarikh i Firuzshahi,* p. 74

[6] *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, vol. II, pp. 874- 79

[7] A. B. M. Habibullah, *The Foundation of Muslim Rule in India*, p. 87

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